An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 7

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From Surah Yunus (10) to Surah Yusuf (12)
The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, "An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an" compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

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Translator(s):

Sayyid Abbas Sadr-'ameli [5]

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Qur'anic Exegesis (Tafsir) [6]

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward" [1].

“We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims" 2.

“When those come to thee who believe* in *Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful” 3.

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell.

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in *which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong).* 4

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir’.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the

command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of *Allah,* the preservation of which has been guaranteed by *Allah,* Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)"[6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of **'References'**) which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.."[7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as *Allah* says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified"[8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself,

viz, Ahlul-Bait, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth- Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul-Bait, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul-Bait's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (a) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled **'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an',** begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation from a lowly life–germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10].

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah*,* we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that *Allah* accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and phililogists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul-Bait (a) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (***created***) ***thing its form and nature and further gave*** (***it***) ***guidance"***[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of '**An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran**' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native

language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought ***A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an,*** basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor... [14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found –no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible –nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"***And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from*** (***sources***) ***he never could imagine..."***[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21].

Wa Salam.

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

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By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيها النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبِّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof* (*the Messenger and the Qur'an*) *from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light* (*that is*) *manifest." 1

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَفِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it* (*from corruption*)*." 2

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message* (*the Qur'an*)*, verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement". 3

وَ نُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down** (**stage by stage**) **of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe ..."4

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

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A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you". 1

(***'Those charged with authority'***

are only the twelve sinless Imams (a) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

*He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'*2

"قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".3

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا "ما إن تمسكتم بهما

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul-Bait; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

*"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".*4

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (a) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (a) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (a) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." 5

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah Yunus, Chapter 10

Surah Yunus (Jonah)
No. 10 (Revealed in Mecca)
109 verses in 11 sections

The Contents of Surah Yunus

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Surah Yunus is the tenth Surah of the Holy Qur'an which was revealed during the early days of the Prophet's appointment in Mecca.

This Surah contains 109 verses, and its main topics are about monotheism, the authenticity of the Qur'an, answers to those who deny revelation, inspiring fear in the unbelievers, exposing the glory and magnitude of the act of creation and of the Creator, the lack of permanence of the world as well as calling the attentions of all peoples to the world after death.

The former Surah, that is "Repentance", dealt with the acts of the hypocrites as well as their punishment, while this Surah refers to the acts of polytheists.

As to the rewards accounted for reciting and reading this Surah, there have been cited some traditions among which is the tradition narrated by Imam Sadiq (as) who said: He who recites Surah Yunus every two or three months may not be of the ignorant and will be of the near-stationed on the Day of Resurrection. 1

1. Tafsir-us-Safi, and Tafsi-i-Burhan

Section 1: The Qur'an Contains Signs From the All-Wise

Surah Yunus – Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

الر تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ

1. "Alif 'A', Lam 'L', Ra 'R'. These are the verses of the Book of Wisdom."

It is noteworthy that six consecutive suras of the Qur'an begin with abbreviated letters which are recited: Alif, Lam, Ra. These Suras are: Yunus, Hud, Yusuf, Ar-Ra'd (with an exception, of course), 'Ibrahim, and Al-Hijr. Each of these letters is an indication to the Names of Allah or to some other things which have been explained at the beginning of Surah Al-Baqarah.

The Arabic word /tilka/ refers to the verses that are found in this Surah.

The objective meaning of the Qur'anic phrase /al kitab il hakim/ is the "Protected Tablet" or the Qur'an. Since it contains wisdom and teaches by means of wisdom, it is therefore Wise.

In other words; the Qur'an has a high rank, because the Holy Book itself is Wise. Simultaneously, while it contains both teachings of wisdom and is wise in content, it is a judge and an arbitrator as well. It remains intact from hostile elements and history and the passage of time can leave no impact upon it. It is "***the Book of Wisdom***".

Surah Yunus – Verse 2

أَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَباً أَنْ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَي رَجُلٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ أَنذِرِ النَّاسَ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ قَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسَاحِرٌ مُبِينٌ

2. "Was it a wonder to the people that We revealed to a man from among themselves that he should warn mankind and give good tidings to those who believe that they have before their Lord the rank of Truth? (While) the unbelievers say: 'This is indeed an evident sorcerer!'"

The verses of wisdom of the Qur'an are composed of the same letters and sounds that are just like Alif, Lam, and Ra.

Their differences with other statements lie in the fact that they are intermingled with divine wisdom, the sort of which is so encompassing that it exposes the truth, and drags mankind to guidance, but the people do not believe this fact that a man, selected from among themselves, can receive revelations from Allah.

This matter is not surprising, since the aim of revelation is to warn the people and give glad tidings to the believers notifying them of the high esteem in which they are being held with their Creator. If they believe firmly in Him, He guides them and rewards them accordingly[1]!

The verse says:

"Was it a wonder to the people that We revealed to a man from among themselves that he should warn mankind and give good tidings to those who believe that they have before their Lord the rank of Truth?..."

The idolaters, however, said that "***this man***" (meaning the Prophet (S), must have obviously been a sorcerer and a magician since he brought something that could not be brought by others.

The verse continues saying:

"...(While) the unbelievers say: 'This is indeed an evident sorcerer!'"

The disbelievers considered prophecy as sorcery and, because of their short sightedness, dark heartedness, and lack of understanding, they could mostly not grasp the truth and distinguish the difference between miracles and the work of magicians.

Surah Yunus – Verse 3

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُدَبِّرُ الأَمْرَ مَا مِن شَفِيعٍ إِلاَّ مِن بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ ذَلِكُمُ اللّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ أَفَلاَ تَذَكَّرُونَ

3. "Verily, your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the Earth in six Days. Then He established Himself on 'Arsh (the Throne), directing the affair. No intercessor can there be except after (obtaining) His leave. This is Allah your Lord; Him therefore worship you: will you not remember?"

The objective meaning of '***Six Days'*** is six periods of time in the course of creation.

The '***throne***' ('arsh) alludes to power and omnipotence. When one says someone was enthroned or

overthrown, he implies that he was elevated in power or stripped of his power. Allah's comprehensive authority extends all over existence both before the creation of the earth and the heavens and after their creation.

The Qur'an says:

"And His 'Arsh** (**throne**) **was over the water."[2]

Even next to the end of the world and during the Resurrection, Allah's omnipotence over all existence will remain intact, too.

The Qur'an says:

"...and above them eight shall bear on that Day your Lord's 'Arsh** (**throne**)**."[3]

Messages

1. Acquiring knowledge about Allah (s.w.t.) should precede worshipping Him.

2. Worship must be kept exclusively for Him Who has the power to create and administer all the affairs of creation and to no one else.

3. The creation of the world has been accomplished according to a plan and an arranged program, (in six days). When there are pre-ordaining plans for all beings in the system of creation, how can one think of human beings, who are the outstanding achievements of the creative process, to be without any planned destiny?

The verse says:

"Verily, your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the Earth in six Days. Then He established Himself on 'Arsh** (**the Throne**)**, directing the affair. ..."

4. Allah has created the entire existence and is in full command, administering it with wisdom while leaving no one in charge of any part without His prior approval.

5. Any effort at mediation by any being must meet with His approval. Thus one, such as idols, cannot be unduly appointed as an intercessor.

The verse says:

"...No intercessor can there be except after** (**obtaining**) **His leave..."

6. Extremists might try to introduce the Creator as Allah, nevertheless they consider themselves as competent policy-makers and able to separate religion from politics.

It says:

"...This is Allah your Lord; Him therefore worship you:..."

Man believes in his Creator. He only needs to be reminded.

The verse concludes:

"...will you not remember?"

7. Deity is not separate from Lordship.

Surah Yunus – Verse 4

إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعاً وَعْدَ اللّهِ حَقّاً إِنَّهُ يَبْدَؤُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ بِالْقِسْطِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ

4. "To Him will be your return, all together. The promise of Allah is true. Verily He originates the (process of) creation, then He causes it to return, that He may reward with justice those who believe and do righteous deeds; but those who disbelieve, for them shall be a drink from the boiling fluids and a painful chastisement for what they used to reject."

This verse puts forth both the principle of Resurrection (***to Him will be your return***)**,** and its probability,

(***...He originates the (process of) creation, then He causes it to return...***).

This meaning is just like verse 19 of Surah Al–'A'raf, No. 7 which states:

"...As He brought you forth in the beginning, so shall you return."

And it also refers to the aim of Resurrection which involves punishment and reward.

The verse continues saying:

"...that He may reward with justice those who believe and do righteous deeds; but those who disbelieve, for them shall be a drink from the boiling fluids and a painful chastisement for what they used to reject."

Therefore, those who are believers and have done good deeds will be rewarded in a just manner, leading them to Paradise. The share of the unbelievers will be a burning liquid made of boiling water that will torture them painfully and they will be kept in Hell forever.

Surah Yunus – Verse 5

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَآءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُوراً وَقَدَّرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ اللّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلاَّ بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

5. "He it is Who made the sun a radiation and the moon a light, and determined it by stations, that you might know the number of years and the reckoning (***of time***)***. Allah did not create that save in truth.*** (***Thus***) ***does He explain the Signs in detail, for a people who know."***

There are words used in the Qur'an for the sun, such as /siraj/ and /diya'/, which signify a strong and intensive light. As for the moon, the words used are /nur/ and /munir/ which signify even dim light as well.

From among the tokens of Allah's designs in the world of existence and His absolute command over the universe, one can name the wise order spread throughout the entire cosmos. Do you not behold what a heat and what a light He has given to the sun?

They change with the changes of the sun in the morning and during the day, and manifest themselves in the variety of the seasons of the year. It varies at dawn and midday, not exceeding the limits at any extreme.

If the sun's heat exceeds what it already is, all the earth would be incinerated, and if it decreases from its present temperature, the earth and what ever is in it will freeze, and in both cases, life will terminate in its totality.

If the light of the sun was extinguished you would no longer be able to see the moon for it borrows its light from the sun. It spreads its light at nighttime over the earth, residing temporarily in its different stages: as the full moon, as a crescent and occasionally disappearing altogether.

Through observing the regularity of these changes mankind can keep track of their days, months and years, organize their work and make plans with a schedule.

That is, it is an accurate natural calendar that can benefit both the sage and the illiterate for keeping track of the rhythm of their work in their daily-lives. This privilege of the moon is besides the light that it gives us.

The verse says:

"He it is Who made the sun a radiation and the moon a light, and determined it by stations, that you might know the number of years and the reckoning (***of time***)***…"***

Then the Qur'an implies that this process of creation and the revolution and rotation of the sun and the moon are not to be dismissed as trivial matters.

The verse continues saying:

"...Allah did not create that save in truth..."

The cloud and the wind, the moon and the sun move in the sky that you may earn your bread, and you should not eat it without being aware of your Provider.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an emphasizes that Allah explains His verses for those who comprehend them although those who are ill-sighted and unaware overlook all these verses, not understanding the slightest thing from them.

It says:

"...(Thus) does He explain the Signs in detail, for a people who know."

Surah Yunus – Verse 7

إِنَّ فِي اخْتِلاَفِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللّهُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَّقُونَ

6. "Verily, in the alternation of night and day, and all that Allah has created in the heavens and the earth, surely there are signs for a people who keep from evil."

Allah has designed the universe in keeping with His Own magnificence and wisdom, the cycle of night and day, the overarching heavens, the fixed and moving stars, the animals, plants, inanimate objects, and all the rest of provisions and bounties provided in the earth are proofs and evidences upon His Oneness and Glory for those people who avoid committing sins and disobeying Allah for the fear of His punishment.

The fact that He only mentions the pious as those who reflect upon His Signs is an indication that it is only such people who take lessons by observing the worldly phenomena. The rest of mankind are blinded by their own negligence and ignorance; no phenomenon can affect on their hearts; thus, they cannot grasp the objectives of creation.

Incidentally, the word 'alternation' /'ixtilaf/, mentioned in the holy verse, signifies coming and going as well as variation. Thus the night and the day are different in some respects:

A. They alternatively substitute for each other. Allah says:

"... The sign of the night have We made to pass away and have We the sign of the day

manifest…" 4

B. Night is pre-ordained for tranquility and the day for the hustle and bustle of struggle.

Allah says:

"And We made the night as a covering,"

"And We made the day for (***seeking***) ***livelihood."*** 5

C. The decrease and increase in the number of daylight hours in the different seasons of the year.

D. The change in the hours of the day and the night in various regions of the world.

The verse says:

"Verily, in the alternation of night and day, and all that Allah has created in the heavens and the earth, surely there are signs for a people who keep from evil."

Question: Why is it that some scientists are atheists?

Answer: In itself, science is not sufficient. The approach to truth must stem from intentional and purposeful people and the motive must originate from those who honestly seek the truth and reality. Thus sins and pollutions from sin leave a negative impact upon one's analysis and cognition.

Surah Yunus – Verses 7 - 8

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لاَ يَرْجُونَ لِقَآءَنَا وَرَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاطْمَأَنُّوا بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ ءَايَاتِنَا غَافِلُونَ

أُوْلَئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

7. "Verily those who do not expect the meeting with Us, but are pleased with the life of this world and are satisfied with it, and those who are neglectful of Our Signs,"
8. "These! Their abode is the Fire for what they used to earn."

From this verse on, there is also a description concerning the Resurrection and the destiny of people in the Hereafter.

At first, the verse says:

"Verily those who do not expect on the meeting with Us, but are pleased with the life of this world and are satisfied with it…"

Then it refers to those who are neglectful of the revelations of Allah and do not meditate upon them so as to be thoroughly awakened and feel responsibility. The verse continues saying:

"...and those who are neglectful of Our Signs,"

Both of these two groups will have their abode in the Fire for the evil actions they have committed. The verse says:

"Their abode is the Fire for what they used to earn."

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"He who loves meeting Allah, Allah also loves meeting him." [6]

In fact, the direct result of the lack of belief in the Resurrection is this very love unto this limited life, of worldly position and a confidence and reliance upon it.

Also, negligence from the revelations of Allah, is the origin of separation from Allah which in turn is the origin of the lack of sympathy and, consequently, falling into pollution, mischief, and sin whose ultimate result cannot be aught but Fire.

Surah Yunus – Verse 9

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُم بِإِيمَانِهِمْ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهِمُ الأَنْهَارُ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

9. "Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds, their Lord will guide them by their Faith: beneath them rivers flow in gardens of bliss."

Then the Qur'an refers to the state of another group who behave opposite of the two groups mentioned before.

The holy verse says:

"Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds, their Lord will guide them by their Faith:..."

This beam of light of Divine guidance which has its origins in their faith enlightens every aspect within the entire horizons of their lives. They are so enlightened by that light that they will never submit themselves to the falsity of the materialist schools, satanic fancies or the false glamour associated with sin, wealth and power, and they never pave the path of astray.

As for the Hereafter, the Creator (s.w.t.) establishes them in palaces and Gardens underneath which Rivers flow.

The verse continues saying:

"...beneath them rivers flow in gardens of bliss."

Surah Yunus – Verse 10

دَعْوَاهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَتَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلاَمٌ وءَاخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبّ الْعَالَمِينَ

10. "Their cry therein (will be): 'Glory be to You, O Allah!' and 'Peace' will be their greeting therein. And the close of their cry (will be): '(All) praise is (only) Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds'."

The faithful will lead their lives in an environment full of peace, kindness, love unto the Lord, and blessings of various kinds. Whenever they contemplate these things and reflect upon His Essence and qualities, in their speech and prayers in Paradise they will invoke their Lord, and as the verse says:

"Their cry therein (will be): 'Glory be to You, O Allah!'..."

And whenever they encounter each other, their talk will be of peace and friendliness. Their greetings are exclusively /salam/.

The verse continues saying:

"...and 'Peace' will be their greeting therein..."

And finally, whenever they enjoy the various blessings of Allah in Paradise, they will start thanking Him, and end their words with gratitude.

The verse says:

"...And the close of their cry (will be): '(All) praise is (only) Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds'."

Explanations

"***Peace***" is the word uttered by the people in Paradise and the atmosphere of Paradise is filled with /salam/ (peace). It comes from different sources, such as from Allah:

"Peace: a word from a Merciful Lord"[7],

and which comes from the angels saying:

"Peace be upon you, you shall be happy;"[8].

It also is uttered by all those who reside in Paradise.

“Only the saying: ‘Peace, Peace’.”[9]

The holy phrase ***“(All) praise is (only) Allah’s”*** is the saying of the prophets and saints. Hadrat Noah (as), after being released from the unjust people uttered these words, and ’Ibrahim (as) also, saying them, thanked Allah in his old age for He had bestowed him Ishmael and Ishaq.

Some Islamic tradition indicate that the People of Paradise, by uttering /subhaanaka ’allahumma/ will call up the hosts of Paradise, who in turn show up immediately and fulfill their wishes. [10]

1. In Islamic quotations, whether those of the Sunnis or those of the Shia‘h, the Prophet of Islam (S) has been known as the Propagator of Truth. (See the of Qurtubi and Al-Borhan).
2. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 7
3. Surah Al-Haqqah, No. 69, verse 17
4. Surah Al-’Isra’, No. 17, verse 12
5. Surah Naba’, No. 78, verses 10, 11
6. Tafsir-ul-Furqan
7. Surah Yaseen, No. 36, verse 58
8. Surah Az-Zumae, No. 39, verse 73
9. Surah Al-Waqi‘ah, No. 56, verse 26
10. The Manhaj-us-Sadiqin

Section 2: Ingratitude of Men

Surah Yunus – Verse 11

وَلَوْ يُعَجِّلُ اللّهُ لِلنَّاسِ الشَّرَّ اسْتِعْجَالَهُم بِالْخَيْرِ لَقُضِيَ إِلَيْهِمْ أَجَلُهُمْ فَنَذَرُ الَّذِينَ لاَيَرْجُونَ لِقَآءَنَا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

11. “And if Allah were to hasten on for men the ill (they have earned) as they would hasten on the good, surely their term would already be decreed unto them. But We leave those who do not expect the meeting with Us, in their contumacy, wandering blindly.”

This verse also deals with the subject of punishment and reward meted out to the evildoers. First, the Qur’an implies if Allah punished the evil-doers swiftly in this world and hastened on their punishment at the same speed in which they are after the good things of this world and their own interests, that would be the end of the world and no traces of them would remain.

The verse says:

“And if Allah were to hasten on for men the ill (they have earned) as they would hasten on the good, Surely their term would already be decreed unto them…”

However, as Allah's grace encompasses all His servants, even the evildoers, idol worshippers, and non-believers, He does not hasten on their punishment lest they wake-up and repent and be lead straight.

At the end of the verse, He says that punishment is for those who do not believe in the Resurrection and the Meeting with Him; they are left alone so that they may stray and remain in confusion, not knowing the truth from "untruth" and the right path from the wrong.

The verse says:

"...But We leave those who do not expect the meeting with Us, in their contumacy, wandering blindly."

Surah Yunus – Verse 12

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنْبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِداً أَوْ قَآئِماً فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ كَأَن لَمْ يَدْعُنَآ إِلَي ضُرٍّ مَسَّهُ كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

12. "And when an affliction touches a man, he calls Us (***while reclining***) ***on his side, or sitting, or standing. But when We remove from him his affliction, he passes on, as if he never called Us to an affliction that touched him. Thus is made fair seeming to the extravagant that which they have been doing."***

Then the Qur'an refers to the existence of the light of monotheism in man, which emanates from the depth of his soul. It indicates that when man suffers from the loss of something, and he is helpless on all sides, he seeks Allah's help by stretching his hands towards Him, calling Him in whatever state he is whether lying on his side, sitting or standing.

The verse says:

"And when an affliction touches a man, he calls Us (***while reclining***) ***on his side, or sitting, or standing..."***

Yes, the positive aspect of the difficulties and painful incidents is that they unveil the true character of human beings and, though it may last merely for a while, the light of monotheism eventually shines forth.

Then the Qur'an implies that these people, however, are so in capacious and unwise that as soon as their troubles are removed they once more become so immersed in oblivion that it is as if they had made no supplications at all, and He had not given them any assistance.
The verse says:

"...But when We remove from him his affliction, he passes on, as if he never called Us to an

affliction that touched him. Thus is made fair seeming to the extravagant that which they have been doing."

It is this very ingratitude and negligence that has made the indecent acts of the mischief makers seemingly beautiful for them.

Surah Yunus – Verse 13

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالبَيِّنَاتِ وَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

13. "And certainly We destroyed the generations before you when they were unjust, and their messengers came to them with clear arguments and they would not believe. Thus do We recompense the guilty people. "

In this holy verse, Allah informs us of the calamities which were inflicted upon previous nations and warns the present nations against the descent of those calamities which may fall upon them.

The Qur'an announces that Allah exterminated former nations by means of kinds of punishment when they inflicted injustice upon themselves by revolting, becoming disobedient, and after sending prophets to them with obvious miracles and clear proofs.

The verse says:

"And certainly We destroyed the generations before you when they were unjust, and their messengers came to them with clear arguments and they would not believe..."

This verse carries this message that the secret of their eradication was that if they had been to remain existent, they definitely would not have believed in their prophets and the Books. Which were sent to them.

In the future, too, Allah will inflict calamities upon those unbelieving people who do not reform themselves in spite of offering them proofs for completing arguments, and with the full understanding that they are well-informed as to the consequences and that they will not believe.

The verse continues saying:

"...Thus do We recompense the guilty people. "

Surah Yunus – Verse 14

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خَلاَئِفَ فِي الأَرْضِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لِنَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ

14. “Then We made you successors in the earth after them to see how you behave.”

Allah expresses more explicitly the matter in this verse, implying that, after destroying them, He substituted you on the earth in their place so that He may observe the way you behave.

The verse says:

“Then We made you successors in the earth after them to see how you behave.”

From the sentence ***“and they would not believe:”,*** mentioned in the previous verse, it is understood that Allah exterminates only those whose situation leaves no hope that they will even be probable believers in the future, for those who may become believers in the future are not involved in this category for such punishments.

Surah Yunus – Verse 15

وإِذَا تُتْلَي عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لاَ يَرْجُونَ لِقَآءَنَا ائْتِ بِقُرْءَانٍ غَيْرِ هَذَآ أَوْ بَدِّ لْهُ قُلْ مَايَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّ لَهُ مِن تِلْقَآئِ نَفْسِي إِنْ أَتَّبِعُ إِلاَّ مَا يُوحَي إِلَيَّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

15. “And when Our Clear Signs are recited unto them, those who do not expect the meeting with Us, say: ‘Bring us a Qur’an other than this, or alter it.’ Say: ‘It is not for me to alter it of my own accord, I follow naught but what is revealed unto me; verily, I fear, if I were to disobey my Lord the Penalty of a Great Day (to come).’”

The Occasion of the Revelation

This holy verse and the next two verses had been revealed concerning several idol-worshippers when they came to the Prophet (S) and said:

“Whatever this Qur’an says about abandoning the worship of our great idols namely Lat, Uzza, Manat, Hubal and its disrespect of them is not acceptable and bearable to us. If you want us to follow you, get us another Qur’an which is free of this criticism, or, at least change such ideas in this present Qur’an.”

These holy verses, following the previous verses, are all concerned with ‘Origin and End’.

First, The Qur’an alludes to one of the great mistakes of the idol-worshippers.

It says:

“And when Our Clear Signs are recited unto them, those who do not expect the meeting with Us, say: ‘Bring us a Qur’an other than this, or alter it.’…”

These ignorant people did not want the Prophet (S) to guide them as a leader; they rather invited him to follow in the footsteps of their own superstitious conjectures.

The Qur'an explicitly enlightens them regarding their grave mistake, ordering the Prophet (S) to tell them that it is impossible for him to alter the Divine revelation by himself.

The verse says:

"...Say: 'It is not for me to alter it of my own accord..."

Then, to articulate further, he should add that he would only follow what was revealed to him, and that not only he could not make any alterations in that heavenly Revelation, but, also he feared the punishment of that Great Day (Resurrection) if he would disobey the Command of the Lord.

The holy verse says:

"...I follow naught but what is revealed unto me; verily, I fear, if I were to disobey my Lord the Penalty of a Great Day (***to come***)***.'"***

Surah Yunus – Verse 16

قُل لَوْ شَآءَ اللَّهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلاَ أَدْرَاكُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُراً مِن قَبْلِهِ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

16. "Say: 'Had Allah so willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have taught it to you. Indeed I have lived amongst you a lifetime before it. Have you then no sense?'"

In this verse the Qur'an brings a reason for the Divine order by commanding the Prophet to say that his ideas do not have the slightest role in this Holy Book, and had Allah wanted, he would not have read the Qur'an to them and they would not have been made aware of it.

The verse says:

"Say: 'Had Allah so willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have taught it to you..."

I have lived among you a long time before this. It provides reason for what I claim, for you have never heard me saying such things before.

If the verses had come from me, you should have heard me saying them during the past forty years as they would have been at the tip of my tongue, or at least parts of it might have been heard by someone in the past. How can you not notice such an obvious matter?

The verse continues saying:

“...Indeed I have lived amongst you a lifetime before it. Have you then no sense?’”

Surah Yunus – Verse 17

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَي عَلَي اللَّهِ كَذِباً أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ لا يُفْلِحُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ

17. “Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah, or belies His Signs? Verily the guilty ones will never prosper.”

In order to emphasize the point, the Prophet (S) adds that, being well aware that the worst kind of evil is that someone falsely attributes a lie to Allah, how could he then commit such a sin on the earth?

The verse says:

“Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah, or belies His Signs?...”

And he who denies the Divine verses, his action is also the most cruel and unjust of all actions. If the unbelievers are unaware of the scope and volume of the severity and greatness of the sin of forging a lie to the Divine verses, the Prophet, on the contrary, is not so unaware. At any event, this action of theirs is a grave offence and those who perpetrate it will never be saved.

The verse says:

“...Verily the guilty ones will never prosper.”

Surah Yunus – Verse 18

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلا يَنفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلآءِ شُفَعَآؤُنَا عِندَ اللَّهِ قُلْ أَتُنَبِّؤُنَ اللَّهَ بِمَا لا يَعلَمُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلا فِي الأَرْضِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَي عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

18. “And they worship, besides Allah, what can neither hurt them nor profit them, and they say: ‘These are our intercessors with Allah.’ Say: ‘Will you inform Allah of what He knows not either in the heavens or in the earth?’ Glory be to Him! High be He exalted above what they associate (***with Him***)***.”***

The issue of monotheism is also continued in this verse by negating the claim that these idols are associated with divinity, and it has been proved as groundless by offering clear reasons. They used to worship icons and idols which neither did any harm to them nor any good.

They were neither feared by the idol worshippers nor did the idols provide them with any profit so that

they were worshipped for gaining benefit thereof.

The verse says:

"And they worship, besides Allah, what can neither hurt them nor profit them…"

The Qur'an deals with the groundless and unfounded claims of the idol worshippers when it implies that they claim that these idols serve as mediators between them and Allah which was one of the motives for worshipping them.

The verse says:

"…and they say: 'These are our intercessors with Allah.'…"

The Qur'an, in response to such a way of thinking, tells the Prophet (S) to ask them a question, as follows:

"…Say: 'Will you inform Allah of what He knows not either in the heavens or in the earth?'…"

Allusion is here made to the fact that if the Almighty had such mediators who would protect them, and wherever on the earth or in the skies they might have existed, He would have been well aware of their existence.

At the end of the verse it stresses emphatically on the fact that Allah is pure and superior to those partners whom they envisage for Him.

The verse says:

"…Glory be to Him! High be He exalted above what they associate (with Him)."

Surah Yunus – Verse 19

وَمَا كَانَ النَّاسُ إِلاَّ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَاخْتَلَفُوا وَلَوْلاَ كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِن رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ فِيمَا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

19. "And mankind were only one community, then they differed, and had not a Word already gone forth from your Lord, their differences would have been judged between them."

This verse refers to the monotheistic nature of all human beings, alluding in part to the previous verse in connection with negating unbelief and idol worshipping. It implies that in the beginning, all human beings were of a single nation, and, with no exception, all were monotheists.

The verse says:

“And mankind were only one community…”

This monotheistic nature, that was untouched at the beginning, because of shortsightedness and some satanic attitudes, underwent changes. With the passage of time, some went astray from the monotheistic path and became the adherents of polytheism. Thus the human society spitted into two groups: Monotheists and Polytheists.

The verse continues saying:

“…then they differed…”

Therefore, polytheism is in fact a deviation from what is innate in human nature, and its roots lie in some baseless ideas and conjectures.

One might raise the issue at this point as to why the Almighty does not hasten to eradicate the origin of such differences by the speedy punishment of the polytheists?

The Qur’an immediately gives an answer to this question implying that if Allah’s command in regard to the absence of their speedy punishment had not been already issued, arbitration would have been administered and their differences would have been judged, then all of them would meet their painful fate.

The verse says:

“…and had not a Word already gone forth from your Lord, their differences would have been judged between them.”

Surah Yunus – Verse 20

وَيَقُولُونَ لَوْلاَ أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ ءَايَةٌ مِن رَبِّهِ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا الْغَيْبُ لِلَّهِ فَانتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُم مِنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ

20. “And they say: ‘Why is not a Sign sent down to him from his Lord?’ Say then: ‘ Verily the Unseen is only for Allah (***to know***)***. Wait you then, verily I, also with you, will be of those who wait’.”***

Once again, the Qur’an deals with the pretexts of the polytheists for evading belief and faith in Islam. It indicates that the disbelievers complain about a miracle not being sent down from Allah to the Prophet (S).

The verse in this regard says:

“And they say: ‘Why is not a Sign sent down to him from his Lord?’…”

They meant, of course, that any time they demanded a miracle they desired, the Prophet (S) should have acted immediately and accordingly [1] to fulfill their demands. It was forthwith revealed to the Prophet (S) that the invisible world and supernatural affairs, (miracles relating to the invisible and metaphysical world), belong to Allah alone.

The verse says:

"...Say then: ' Verily the Unseen is only for Allah (to know)..."

Therefore the Prophet (S) should tell them he could not perform miracles according to their wishes, which they would later deny and which would not convince them to become believers. In the final analysis, they refrained from believing regardless of the pretext.

At the end of the verse, from his tongue, the Qur'an, in a threatening tone implies that if they did not stop being obstinate, they should expect divine punishment whilst, on the other hand, the Prophet (S) should expect victory.

The verse says:

"...Wait you then, verily I, also with you, will be of those who wait'."

1. Some commentators state that Allah is aware of the world of Unseen and whatever stands in the way of divine miracles to be sent down is itself invisible, none is aware but Allah.

Section 3: The Divine Mercy

Surah Yunus – Verse 21

وإِذَآ أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً مِن بَعْدِ ضَرَّآءَ مَسَّتْهُمْ إِذَا لَهُم مَكْرٌ فِي ءَايَاتِنَا قُلِ اللَّهُ أَسْرَعُ مَكْراً إِنَّ رُسُلَنَا يَكْتُبُونَ مَاتَمْكُرُونَ

21. "And when We make mankind taste of (Our) mercy after adversity hath touched them, behold! they have a device concerning Our Signs! Say: 'Allah is quicker at devising. Verily, Our messengers record what you devise'.""

The previous verse alluded to the pretexts of those who used to ask why no new signs were revealed. Here Allah refers to their obstinacy and to the fact that they played dirty tricks after a new verse was revealed instead of appreciating it.

The verse says:

“And when We make mankind taste of (Our) mercy after adversity hath touched them, behold! they have a device concerning Our Signs!...”

As for the occasion of revelation of this verse, it has been said that there occurred a drought and famine in Mecca. The Almighty (s.w.t.) made it rain for the blessing of His Prophet (S). The polytheists claimed, however, that the reason for the rain was because of the idols. [1]

One of the measures and tricky devices employed by his enemies was character assassination of the Prophet (S), ridiculing the divine verses, and degrading the blessings of Allah.

At any rate, man misuses God-given blessings and makes mischief instead of giving thanks and we must know that he who plays dirty tricks, will ultimately be involved with the device and the punishment of Allah.

The verse says:

“...Say: ‘Allah is quicker at devising...”

Then, He warns them not to think that such conspiracies and plans will be forgotten. His messengers, (that is, His angels responsible for recording human actions) will take note of all those plans which disbelievers arrange for extinguishing the light of the truth. And they must prepare themselves for the Judgment and the punishment in the world here-after.

The verse says:

“...Verily, Our messengers record what you devise’.”

Surah Yunus – Verse 22

هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ حَتَّي إِذَا كُنتُمْ فِي الْفُلْكِ وَجَرَيْنَ بِهِم بِرِيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا جَآءَتْهَا رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَآءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِن كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ أُحِيطَ بِهِمْ دَعَوُا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ لَئِنْ أَنجَيْتَنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ

22. “He it is Who enables you to traverse through land and sea; so that you are in the ships, and they sail with them with a favourable wind, and they rejoice thereat. Then there comes upon them a stormy wind and the waves come on them from all sides, and they think that they are encompassed therewith, they call upon Allah, making their faith pure for Him, (saying): ‘If You deliver us from this, we shall surely be of the grateful ones’.”

In this verse the Qur’an appeals to the depths of human nature, explaining to them the monotheism which is embedded in their very being, describing to them how man once in great difficulty and danger,

tends to forget everything but Allah.

First, He says that He is the One Who enables you to traverse through the land and the sea. And, when you go on board a ship, He makes you eventually get, you and your ship, to your destination with the help of the appropriate winds that gladden every heart.

Then when a horrible thunderstorm blows and waves buffet them from all sides, it makes them realize that death is near, and they lose their hopes of survival.

The verse says:

"He it is Who enables you to traverse through land and sea; so that you are in the ships, and they sail with them with a favourable wind, and they rejoice thereat. Then there comes upon them a stormy wind and the waves come on them from all sides, and they think that they are encompassed therewith..."

At just about that time, they are reminded of Allah and call upon Him sincerely, their thoughts stripped of all sorts of polytheism and idol worship.

The verse continues saying:

"...they call upon Allah, making their faith pure for Him..."

They start praying at this time, saying that if Allah save them from this plight, they will thank Him while they shall neither oppress others nor turn to others for help save Him.

The verse says:

"...(saying): 'If You deliver us from this, we shall surely be of the grateful ones'."

Although this temporary awakening will often have no remarkable educational effect upon extraordinarily wicked people, yet He completes the process of reasoning to the end to them, and it will serve as their eventual condemnation.

In such incidents, those individuals, who are only slightly polluted, are usually awakened and tend to reform themselves.

Surah Yunus – Verse 23

فَلَمَّآ أَنجَاهُمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَبْغُونَ فِي الاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا بَغْيُكُمْ عَلَي أَنفُسِكُم مَتَاعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرجِعُكُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُم تَعْمَلُونَ

23. "But when He delivers them, behold! They rebel in the earth unjustly. O mankind! Your

rebellion is against your own selves, an enjoyment of the life of this world. Then to Us is your return, and We shall inform you of what you used to do."

But such neglectful people usually start bothering others and oppressing them on the earth, as soon as Allah saves them and leads them to safe shores.

The verse says:

"But when He delivers them, behold! They rebel in the earth unjustly. ..."

Yet, the Qur'an advises people to know that whatever oppression they commit and whatever sort of deviation they have made from the right path, they themselves will pay its price.

The verse says:

"...O mankind! Your rebellion is against your own selves..."

The only thing that they may be able to do is to enjoy the life in this world for merely a few days, and finally their eventual return will be towards Allah. It is at that time that they shall be informed of whatever they did in the world.

The verse says:

"...an enjoyment of the life of this world. Then to Us is your return, and We shall inform you of what you used to do."

Surah Yunus – Verse 24

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَآءٍ أَنزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الاَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالاَنْعَامُ حَتَّي إِذَآ أَخَذَتِ الأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ أَهْلُهَآ أَنَّهُمْ قَادِرُونَ عَلَيْهَآ أَتَاهَآ أَمْرُنَا لَيْلاً أَوْ نَهَاراً فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيداً كَأَن لَمْ تَغْنَ بِالاَمْسِ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

24. "The likeness of the life of this world is just as the water which We send down from the sky, and the plants of the earth mingle with it whereof men and cattle eat, till when the earth takes its ornament and is embellished, and its people imagine that they have power over it, (***but suddenly***) ***Our command reaches it by night or by day, and We make it stubble, as if it had not flourished the day before! Thus do We explain the Signs in detail for a people who reflect.***

In the foregoing verses allusion had been made to the lack of permanence in this worldly life. In this holy verse this grave reality is depicted with an interesting example so that He may remove the curtain of arrogance and negligence from the eyes of those who are neglectful and unjust.

The verse says:

"The likeness of the life of this world is just as the water which We send down from the sky…"

These life-providing drops fall on cultivable soil, making it possible for various plants to grow, some of which are useful for man, and others that are useful for birds and beasts.

The verse continues saying:

"…and the plants of the earth mingle with it whereof men and cattle eat…"

These plants, besides the nutritional qualities that they contain for living creatures, cover the earth's surface and decorate it so that the earth finds its utmost beauty in it.

It is at this time that the blossoms decorate the branches and the flowers bloom. Nutritious grains and fruits show up gradually, dramatically depicting the full meaning of the scene of life, thus rendering people's hearts hopeful and their eyes full of joy.

This is done to the extent that people on the earth become certain that they can benefit from the blessings of the plants and fruits as well as from their life-inducing grains.

The verse says:

"…till when the earth takes its ornament and is embellished, and its people imagine that they have power over it…"

All of a sudden, Allah's command reaches them, ordering excessive cold, unexpected heavy rains or strong thunderstorms to overwhelm and eradicate them all as if they never existed.

The verse continues saying:

"…(but suddenly) Our command reaches it by night or by day, and We make it stubble, as if it had not flourished the day before!…"

Towards the end of the verse, in order to emphasize further, Allah declares:

"…Thus do We explain the Signs in detail for a people who reflect.

Surah Yunus – Verse 25

وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُواْ إِلَي دَارِ السَّلاَمِ وَيَهْدِي مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَي صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

25. "And Allah doth call mankind to the Abode of Peace and He guides whomever He Pleases

unto the Straight path."

The Arabic appellation /dar-us-Salam/ is one of the names of Paradise within which nobody bears any grudge against another and where no quarrel, war, and exploitation takes place.

The verse says:

"And Allah doth call mankind to the Abode of Peace and He guides whomever He Pleases unto the Straight path."

The holy word "***Peace***" is Allah's name, and "***the Abode of Peace***" signifies the proximity of the divine blessings. It is the place where everyone's words and greetings consist of "peace", and unto whom Allah also sends peace.

The Qur'an says:

"Peace: a word from a Merciful Lord." (***Surah Yasin, verse 58***)

Some Islamic traditions indicate that the way leads to the mastership (wilayat) of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen (as) and the Immaculate Imams, has been stated as the best example for the '***Straight Path***'.[2]

We must note that the divine call is the symbol of His special favour towards His servants. It embodies the safe passage of man in this world and the Hereafter, the first stage of which is transient while the second stage is permanent.

Incidentally, the Straight Path is one which creates 'peace' for man not only in the Hereafter, but also creates peace for him in this world.

Surah Yunus – Verse 26

لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَي وَزِيَادَةٌ وَلاَ يَرْهَقُ وُجُوهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَلاَ ذِلَّةٌ أُوْلَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

26. "For those who do good, is a goodly (***reward***)***, and more*** (***than this***)***. Neither dust nor abasement shall over spread their faces. They are Companions of the Garden; they will abide therein forever."***

The Arabic term /rahiqa/ signifies covering by force and the word /qatar/ means 'dust', 'smoke' and 'ashes'.

Bestowing incremental and extra rewards on the believers has repeatedly been mentioned in the Qur'an by the words /ziyadah/, /zi'f/ and /'az'af/.

Among them are the following verses:

"Whoever brings a good (deed), he shall have ten times its like..." [3]

"...He will pay them their rewards fully and with bestow upon them more out of His Grace." [4]

In addition to the complete reward, Allah also bestows upon them more for partaking of his own virtue, there is a seven hundred-fold reward for giving charity for Allah's sake.

"The likeness of those who spend their property in the way of Allah is as the likeness of a grain (of corn) that grows seven ears, (with) a hundred grains in every ear. And Allah multiplies (in abundance) for whom He wills; and Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing." [5]

Imam Sadiq (as) declares:

"Every thing has its own system of measurement except tears, a drop of which extinguishes fires".

Then he (as) said:

"He who sheds tears for the sake of Allah, his face will never confront darkness and humiliation,"

and he recited:

"Neither dust nor abasement shall overspread their face." [6]

Fadil-bin-Yasar, has narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who said that the Messenger of Allah (S) declared;

"There are no eyes which are soaked with tears for the fear of Allah except that Allah forbids that body to be in the Fire of Hell. Were he to shed tears, his face would not be covered by the dust and abasement". [7]

At any rate, those who turn to other than Allah, have no excuses to make as Allah (s.w.t.) simultaneously extends His invitation to man and, at the same time, leads him; He not only rewards but also rewards more and more.

The verse says:

"For those who do good, is a goodly (reward), and more (than this). Neither dust nor abasement shall over spread their faces. They are Companions of the Garden; they will abide therein forever."

Surah Yunus – Verse 27

وَالَّذِينَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ جَزَآءُ سَيِّئَةٍ بِمِثْلِهَا وَتَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ مَا لَهُم مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ كَأَنَّمَآ أُغْشِيَتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ قِطَعاً مِنَ
اللَّيْلِ مَظْلِماً أُوْلَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

27. “And those who have earned evil will have a reward of like evil; and the dust of ignominy will cover them. No defender will they have from (the wrath of) Allah: as if their faces had been covered with pieces from the darkness of night. They are Companions of the Fire: they will abide therein forever!”

And those who have committed evil acts and sins will be punished accordingly in proportion to their acts. They will be punished to the extent they deserve, not more, for punishment beyond that which a person deserves is something inequitable (which is far from the Divine Providence).

On the other hand, the reward for good deeds exceeds what one deserves and it is good to emanate from Allah. Therefore, the objective meaning of the word “***like***”, in this verse, is nothing more and nothing less than one’s due.

The verse says:

“And those who have earned evil will have a reward of like evil;…”

The Qur’anic phrase /wa tar haqahum ḏillah/ signifies that such sinners will be humiliated and become debased, for punishment is coupled with degradation.

The verse continues saying:

“…and the dust of ignominy will cover them…”

Then the verse implies that there are no guards and obstacles to hinder the punishment of Allah from them.

It says:

“…No defender will they have from (the wrath of) Allah:…”

The obscurity reflected on their faces would be to such an extent that one would imagine that parts of the darkness of the night had cast their shadow, one after another, over them.

The verse says:

“…as if their faces had been covered with pieces from the darkness of night…”

They shall be coupled with the Hell Fire and will eternally remain within its flames.

The verse concludes saying:

“…They are Companions of the Fire: they will abide therein forever!”

Surah Yunus – Verse 28

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعاً ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا مَكَانَكُمْ أَنتُمْ وَشُرَكَآؤُكُمْ فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَقَالَ شُرَكَآؤُهُم مَّا كُنتُمْ إِيَّانَا تَعْبُدُونَ

28. "And the Day We shall muster them all, then We shall say to those who associated others (with Us): 'Get you to your place! You and your associates', then We shall set a space between them, and their associates shall say: 'It was not us (indeed) that you used to worship!'"

This verse also follows the previous discussions on the issue of the origin of existence and the Resurrection and the situation of the polytheists.

At first, the Qur'an warns all to remember the Day when Allah will assemble all His subjects and make them rise from the dead.

The verse says:

"And the Day We shall muster them all..."

Then He will declare unto the polytheists to stay in their place together with their idols so that He may examine their account.

It continues saying:

"...then We shall say to those who associated others (with Us):..."

The Qur'an informs that Allah will separate these two groups from each other; i.e. the worshippers and the worshipped ones, and He will question each individual separately, as it is usual with all courts that they investigate each person separately.

The verse says:

"...'Get you to your place! You and your associates', then We shall set a space between them..."

Allah may ask the idol-worshippers why they worshipped idols along with Allah (s.w.t.), and He will also ask the idols why they permitted such an act to occur, that they allowed the polytheists to worship them.

It is at this time that those things that were worshipped as idols will speak, saying to them that they never worshipped idols. In actual fact, they worshipped the creation of their own imaginations, whims and passions.

The verse says:

"...and their associates shall say: 'It was not us (indeed) that you used to worship!'"

Surah Yunus – Verse 29

فَكَفَي بِاللَّهِ شَهِيداً بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ إِن كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ لَغَافِلِينَ

29. "Allah is a sufficient witness between us and you: we certainly were Unaware of your worship (of us)."

In the previous verse, those things worshipped were saying that the polytheists did not worship them. Here, they declare that they were unaware of their worship.

The verse says:

"Allah is a sufficient witness between us and you: we certainly were Unaware of your worship (of us)."

Consequently, whatever act of worship is performed without the knowledge of the worshipped is null and void.

Incidentally, there are numerous allusions made to the hatred and disavowal of those objects worshipped from the polytheists and their deeds in the Qur'an, i.e., Surah Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse 17, and Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 63.

Surah Yunus – Verse 30

هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُوا كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَآ أَسْلَفَتْ وَرُدُّوا إِلَي اللَّهِ مَوْلاَهُمُ الْحَقّ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ

30. "There will every soul realize (the reward of) the deeds it sent aforetime, and they will be brought back to Allah, their true Lord, and that which they used to fabricate (the false deities) will vanish (away) from them."

The Day of Resurrection is the day on which the worldly test results are received.

The verse says:

"There will every soul realize (the reward of) the deeds it sent aforetime..."

The true Lord is Allah and any other than Him, whatever it may be, is absurd.

The verse says:

"...and they will be brought back to Allah, their true Lord..."

The Resurrection pertains to all men. And the false effects of the worshipped will be wiped out.

The verse continues saying:

"...and that which they used to fabricate (the false deities) will vanish (away) from them."

All existence has its origin in Him, and the final destination will be towards Him, too.

1. The commentary of As-Safi, Fi-Zalal-il-Qur'an and Fakhr-i-Razi
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan
3. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 160
4. Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 173
5. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 261
6. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the
7. Majma' ul-Bayan

Section 4: The Divine Gifts

Surah Yunus – Verse 31

قُلْ مَن يَرْزُقُكُم مِنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالأَرْضِ أَمَّن يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالاَبْصَارَ وَمَن يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَن يُدَبِّرُ الاَمْرَ فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ فَقُلْ أَفَلا تَتَّقُونَ

31. "Say: "Who provides you (sustenance) from the sky and from the earth? Or who possesses hearing and sight? And who brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the dead from the living? And, who administrates (every) affair? They will soon say: 'Allah'. Then, say: 'Will you not then keep from evil?'"

There have been said same examples of Allah's bringing forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living, among which one might cite the case of the human sperm leading to human beings and human seed from human beings, the chicken from the egg and egg from the chicken, plants from seeds, and seeds from plants; socially – righteous children from corrupt parents and corrupt children from worthy parents.

In this verse there are hints regarding the existence of the Lord and His right of being worshipped.

At first, the holy Qur'an addresses the Prophet (S) implying to tell those polytheists and idol-worshippers, that who are going astray, who is it that provides nourishment for you in the sky and on the

earth?

The verse says:

"Say: "Who provides you (sustenance) from the sky and from the earth?..."

Definitely, the earth provides nourishment for the roots of plants by means of its nutritious substances. It is probably for this reason that the above verse refers to the nourishing substances coming from the sky and later from the earth.

Later, the verse refers to two of man's most important senses, namely seeing and hearing, without which man's acquisition of knowledge would have been impossible. It tells him to ask them who is He Who is the Creator of their eyes and ears and reinforces these two senses of theirs.

The verse says:

"...Or who possesses hearing and sight?..."

Then it brings up the two phenomena of death and life which are the most peculiar ones in the realm of creation.

It says:

"...And who brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the deed from the living?..."

This is the very issue confronted by scientists and the learned men of the natural sciences as well as biologists, amazing them that how living creatures spring from inanimate objects.

The meaning of the above verse includes material as well as spiritual death and life, for one can see intelligent, honest and faithful men sometimes born to parents who are corrupt and faithless, and vice versa.

Then it adds implying that Who is He who rules and regulates all worldly affairs?

The verse says:

"...And, who administrates (every) affair?..."

In fact, the verse at first talks about the creation of the blessings and then it speaks about the guardian and administrator of these blessings.

After putting forth these three questions, the holy Qur'an immediately declares that they will soon answer in reply that it is Allah.

The verse says:

"...They will soon say: 'Allah'..."

One may infer from the above sentence that even the polytheists, infidels and idol-worshippers during the "Age of Ignorance" considered Allah as the sole Creator, Sustainer, Giver of Life as well as the Administrator and Maintainer of the world of existence.

And at the end of the verse the Prophet (S) has been commanded to ask them: why they did not take the path of virtue. It says:

"...Then, say: 'Will you not then keep from evil?'"

Surah Yunus – Verse 32

فَذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَاذَا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ إِلاَّ الضَّلاَلُ فَأَنَّي تُصْرَفُونَ

32. "Such then is Allah, your true Lord; and what is apart from the Truth but error? How then are you turned away?"

After explaining some of the symbols of the signs of the magnitude and the prudence of Allah (s.w.t.) in the heavens and the earth, and through this, appealing to the conscience and intellect of the opponents by which they confessed to it, He decisively declares in this verse that this is Allah, your true Creator, not the idols or other beings you have considered as partners with Allah for the sake of worship in front of which you bow down.

The verse says:

"Such then is Allah, your true Lord; and what is apart from the Truth but error?..."

Concluding these remarks, the Qur'an implies: now that you have come to clearly know the truth, do you not realize that you are certain of being misled if you take any path other than the truth?

How can you turn away from worshipping Allah despite your knowledge that there is no one else worthy to be worshipped?

The verse says:

"...How then are you turned away?"

This verse in fact, offers us a clear logical way for knowing the wrong and abandoning it. This way is that: one must first try to know the truth by way of his own conscience and reasoning.

After the cognition of the truth, one must abandon whatever is contrary to the truth or other than the truth, because they are those things that mislead.

Surah Yunus – Verse 33

كَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَي الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا أَنَّهُمْ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ

33. "Thus is the Word of your Lord proved true against those who did wrong, that they will not believe."

Breaking the laws of Allah and committing sins provide the grounds for infidelity and in this way man makes Allah's wrath upon himself inevitable.

The verse says:

"Thus is the Word of your Lord proved true against those who did wrong..."

This is the direct result of their continuous indecency which may darken their hearts and pollute their spirits to the extent that they cannot see the enlightening state of the truth, and thus they go astray.

The verse continues saying:

"...that they will not believe."

Surah Yunus – Verse 34

قُلْ هَلْ مِن شُرَكَآئِكُم مَن يَبْدَوُّا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ قُلِ اللَّهُ يَبْدَوُّا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ فَانَّي تُؤْفَكُونَ

34. "Say: 'Is there any of your partners** (**whom you ascribe unto Allah**) **one** (**that**) **can originate creation, then bring it back again?' Say: '**(**Only**) **Allah originates creation, then brings it back again; then how are you turned away** (**from the Truth**)**?'"

The Qur'an asks whether those whom you consider as Allah's partners are able to create and then annihilate that creation and recreate it again in the same way that Allah is able to do. The polytheists know that creation is solely in Allah's Power. Then, why is it that they again weave false stories and lie?

The verse declares:

"Say: 'Is there any of your partners** (**whom you ascribe unto Allah**) **one** (**that**) **can originate creation, then bring it back again?' Say: '**(**Only**) **Allah originates creation, then brings it back again; then how are you turned away** (**from the Truth**)**?'"

Surah Yunus – Verse 35

قُلْ هَلْ مِن شُرَكَائِكُم مَّن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ ۚ قُلِ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِّ ۗ أَفَمَن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَن يُتَّبَعَ أَمَّن لَّا يَهِدِّي إِلَّا أَن يُهْدَىٰ ۖ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ

35. "Say: 'Is there any of your partners (whom you ascribe unto Allah) one that leads towards the Truth? Say: '(Only) Allah leads unto the Truth. Is then He Who leads unto the Truth more worthy to be followed, or he who does not go aright (himself) unless he is guided? What then is the matter with you? How do you judge?'"

The Qur'an asks once again implying that who provides the living with life and leads them while managing their material and spiritual lives, it self Is He your sole Allah, or are the idols?

The verse says:

"Say: 'Is there any of your partners (whom you ascribe unto Allah) one that leads towards The Truth?..."

Then, the Qur'an, answers that it is the Creator Who guides us and has bestowed on us intellect, ears and eyes, providing the living with instincts which help them manage their affairs in their own interests.

Thus, despite all this: Is it appropriate for us to submit ourselves to idols which cannot lead us? How is it that the worshippers of idols submit and surrender to such things which are neither able to guide anyone nor have they the potentiality of being led?

The verse continues saying:

"...Say: '(Only) Allah leads unto The Truth. Is then He Who leads unto the Truth more worthy to be followed, or he who does not go aright (himself) unless he is guided? What then is the matter with you? How do you judge?'"

Surah Yunus – Verse 36

وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلاَّ ظَنّاً إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئاً إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ

36. "And most of them follow nothing but conjecture: truly, conjecture can be of no avail against the Truth. Verily Allah is well aware of what they do."

Thus the reason for their being misled and misguided is that they follow their own conjectures and their own corrupt speculations. Conjectures will never lead us to the Truth and to Reality. Following

conjectures only results in the doing of indecencies.

The verse says:

"And most of them follow nothing but conjecture: truly, conjecture can be of no avail against The Truth..."

What is of real value is "knowledge". Sound conjecture and confidence, if based on proper solid grounds is valuable, i.e. those conjectures deducted from the apparent words of the holy verses (and quotations) derived from the Allah's commandments which are practiced by Islamic jurisprudents (Fuqaha') in even the minute details of problems.

The verse says:

"...Verily Allah is well aware of what they do."

However, conjectures in the realm of ideas, if they are rooted in pursuing the vain way of one's ancestors or fanaticism based on ignorance are groundless, and hence, are of no avail.

Surah Yunus – Verse 37

وَمَا كَانَ هَذَا الْقُرْءَانُ أَن يُفْتَرَي مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِن تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ الْكِتَابِ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِن رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

37. "And this Qur'an is not such as to be produced by other than Allah; but it is a confirmation of (revelations) that went before it, and a (clear) explanation of the Book, wherein there is no doubt, from the Lord of the Worlds."

The comprehensive nature of the Qur'an and its contents are such that any kind of unsound allegation ascribed to it and relating it to other than Allah (s.w.t.) is unreasonable.

The holy verse says:

"And this Qur'an is not such as to be produced by other than Allah; but it is a confirmation of (revelations) that went before it..."

All heavenly Books confirm each other; their differences lie only in the conciseness and detail of their contents.

The verse continues saying:

"...and a (clear) explanation of the Book, wherein there is no doubt, from the Lord of the Worlds."

Surah Yunus – Verse 38

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

38. "Or they say, 'He has forged it.' Say: 'Bring then a Surah like unto it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can, besides Allah, if you are truthful!'"

The Qur'an has reiterated on several occasions that the words of Allah (the Qur'an) are miracles because of the inability of man and jinn to present something similar, and it has presented this challenge to both of them.

Among the verses that testify to this fact, one may cite verse 13 of the Surah Hud. Despite the fact that Islam has had millions of opponents throughout history and still has such enemies, and they have striven to weaken the Qur'an and defeat Islam, carrying out intensive activities in the process, yet this confident challenge of the Qur'an has been left unanswered and will continue to be so until the Day of Resurrection.

Since we are dealing with setting the dimensions and the definition of the Qur'an, we will now point out some aspects of this divine miracle.

1. It distills extensive and profound wisdom into concise words. For instance, regarding the relationship of man and woman, it comments:

"They (your wives) are a clothing for you and you are a clothing for them.'[1]

To explain the fragility and vulnerability of the non-divine powers, it likens them to a spider's web or declares that they are unable to create even a gnat.

It says:

"...verily those whom you call upon besides Allah cannot create a gnat..."[2]

2. Its profundity and the sweetness of words do not render it monotonous even if it may be read over and again for more than thousand times; on the contrary, each time it is studied it presents new messages.

3. Its harmony of words is especially outstanding and if a Qur'anic verse is placed among other Arabic texts or passages it can be easily distinguished from them.

4. The comprehensive nature of the Qur'an: It includes reasoning and demonstration to citing examples from worldly affairs to the life in hereafter, and also the facts concerning family problems, legal, political, military, ethical, historical teachings etc.

5. Its realism: Its contents are not based upon conjecture; even its stories are documented and real.

6. The universal and all-embracing nature of the Qur'an: All people will benefit from it at all levels and in all places regardless of whenever or wherever they are; it is not a Book particular to a special time, place, or people.

7. The eternal effect of the Qur'an: The older the age of humanity and the more the sciences progress the more of its secrets are discovered.

8. Its ever-increasing and its everlasting development: Despite having an increasing number of enemies and the growing number of attacks launched against it during its history, it has not only survived but also it has secured the highest station.

9. It is an ever-existing miracle by itself. A miracle that is available to all and is composed of the kind of words that put it at everyone's disposal.

10. It is both a miracle and a Book of commandments and legal codes.

11. It is a token from an illiterate man from a region deprived of literacy.

12. Nothing has been added to it or deducted from it and it has been kept intact from distortion. The Qur'an puts forth the simplest challenge, of calling people to present a Surah like it, to prove its being miraculous.

It declares:

"Or they say, 'He has forged it.' Say: 'Bring then a Surah like unto it…"

The Qur'an is a miracle not only in its entirety but also every one of its suras proves the same. This challenge of the Qur'an is not confined to a specific time and place. It will stand unanswered all over the globe until the end of the life of mankind and the Day of Resurrection.

The Qur'an's challenge is not only issued to the common people, on the contrary, it is issued to all of mankind, including: jurisconsults, men of letters, and geniuses.

It continues saying:

"…and call (to your aid) anyone you can, besides Allah, if you are truthful!'"

Surah Yunus – Verse 39

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعِلْمِهِ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهُ كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ

39. “Nay, they belied that which they comprehended not with the knowledge of it, which whose interpretation has not yet come to them. Even thus did belie those before them, see then what was the end of the unjust ones.”

The opponents of the prophets have often had two reasons for their dissidence throughout history, one of which was due to their ignorance and the other to their lack of knowledge and intellectual appreciation of the glorious Qur’an as well as the other heavenly Books.

It says:

“Nay, they belied that which they comprehended not with the knowledge of it, which whose interpretation has not yet come to them. Even thus did belie those before them…”

They rejected the Qur’an before they knew the truth about it and had not grasped command of its interpretation and meaning; because it was fundamentally against their ancestral religion. Hence, as to the eventual fate of the oppressors, the verse continues saying:

“…see then what was the end of the unjust ones.”

Surah Yunus – Verse 40

وَمِنْهُم مَّن يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَمِنْهُم مَن لا يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ

40. “And some of them believe in it and some of them do not believe in it; and your Lord knows best the mischief makers.”

A leader must not expect everyone to believe in his way. He must lead them on to the Right Path and if they do not follow, he can only let them wait for the divine punishment.

The verse says:

“And some of them believe in it and some of them do not believe in it; and your Lord knows best the mischief makers.”

1. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 187
2. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 73

Section 5: Every People Had an Apostle from Allah

Surah Yunus – Verse 41

وَإِن كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُل لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ أَنتُم بَرِيئُونَ مِمَّآ أَعْمَلُ وَأَنَاْ بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

41. "And if they belie you, say: 'For me is my work and for you is your work. You are quit of what I do, and I am quit of what you do'."

A leader must prepare himself for a party of the people to oppose him, and he must not feel defeated when he is confronted the rejecters because he will benefit from the guidance he provides them under every circumstance. Opponents also will meet their fate, resulting from their rejection and obstinacy. The winner in this scene will be the one who provides guidance.

The verse says:

"And if they belie you, say: 'For me is my work and for you is your work..."

Incidentally, Islam is the religion of reason and ethics; it is not a religion of reconciliation with the idolaters. Were they not to answer the call of Allah (s.w.t.), you should express your abhorrence towards their ideas and behaviour.

The verse continues saying:

"...You are quit of what I do, and I am quit of what you do'."

Surah Yunus – Verse 42

وَمِنْهُم مَن يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ أَفَانتَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لا يَعْقِلُونَ

42. "And (when you recite the Qur'an) some of them (pretend to) listen to you, but can you make the deaf to hear, even though they are without understanding?"

The Qur'an addresses the Prophet (S) and implies that when you are reading the Qur'an and teaching the Divine commandments, there are some people who listen to you but do not accept what you have to say and do not reflect upon them.

And there are some people who look toward you and take your guidance, contemplating and paying more attention to the symbols of your appointment to prophecy, yet they do not testify them.

The verse says:

"And** (**when you recite the Qur'an**) **some of them** (**pretend to**) **listen to you…"

Then the verse implies whether he is able to make himself be heard when he as faced with those who are deaf, especially, when in addition to being deaf reason does not prevail. For a deaf wise man may sometimes pay attention to reasoning.

The verse continues saying:

"…but can you make the deaf to hear, even though they are without understanding?"

Surah Yunus – Verse 43

وَمِنْهُم مَن يَنظُرُ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنتَ تَهْدِي الْعُمْيَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لا يُبْصِرُونَ

43. "And some of them look at you, but can you guide the blind even though they will not see** (**inwardly**)**?"

Not all kinds of observation always take place with insight and not every observer is attracted by the truth. Even the prophets could not affect those who were blind-hearted. That is why the Qur'an inquires whether he wish to be able to guide a blind man who is not only blind but also is lacking in insight; in addition to his blindness.

The verse says:

"And some of them look at you, but can you guide the blind even though they will not see** (**inwardly**)**?"

The objective of this question is that such people lack wisdom and insight like the deaf and the blind from the point of view of their obstinacy in accepting the truth and adhering to it.

Surah Yunus – Verse 44

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئاً وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

44. "Verily Allah does not any injustice to people but people to their own selves do injustice."

Allah has sent the best school, the best Book and the best leader for the people. If they do not accept them, they in fact inflict oppression upon themselves. That is, Allah does not hinder anyone from benefiting from the Qur'an and other divine proofs.

However, it is the people themselves who allow themselves to be oppressed because of abandoning their reason, and therefore, they make themselves deserving for retribution.

The verse says:

"Verily Allah does not any injustice to people but people to their own selves do injustice."

Surah Yunus – Verse 45

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ كَأَن لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلاَّ سَاعَةً مِنَ النَّهَارِ يَتَعَارَفُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِلِقَآءِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ

45. "And on the Day He will muster them, as if they had tarried but an hour of the day, they will recognize each other. Those will verily have perished who denied the meeting with Allah and were not guided a right."

The greatness of the Day of Judgment is such that ones entire life prior to it will seem as if it lasted only a short time.

The Qur'an commands us to remember the Day when Allah will make them all rise from the dead and assemble them and they will have a feeling that their entire lives in this world had not exceeded more than one single day, so much that they would get to see and to know one another.

The verse in this regard says:

"And on the Day He will muster them, as if they had tarried but an hour of the day, they will recognize each other..."

Therefore, the real losers are those people whose negation of the Resurrection deprives them from the eternal benefits of the life of Hereafter, and are content with worldly pleasures. On the contrary, the believers enjoy both worldly divine blessings and a share in the Hereafter as well.

The verse continues saying:

"...Those will verily have perished who denied the meeting with Allah and were not guided a right."

Surah Yunus – Verse 46

وإِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَي مَا يَفْعَلُونَ

46. "Whether We show you (***realized in your lifetime***) ***some part of what We promise them, or We take your soul, to Us is their return. Then Allah is witness to*** (***all***) ***what they do."***

The punishment of some of the infidels took place during the Badr, Hunayn, Ahzab and the conquest of Mecca. After the death of the Prophet (S), Allah's Power is extended to apply punishment upon those who deserve it.

Therefore, Allah takes note of the acts of the disbelievers and punishes them, whether at the present time or at other times. Hence, Muslims need not despair because of the delay in the Divine Judgment concerning these people.

The verse says:

"Whether We show you (***realized in your lifetime***) ***some part of what We promise them, or We take your soul..."***

At any rate, the return of all beings terminates in Him and nobody is able to flee the divine court of justice.

The holy verse continues saying:

"...to Us is their return. Then Allah is witness to (***all***) ***what they do."***

Surah Yunus – Verse 47

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولٌ فَإِذَا جَآءَ رَسُولُهُمْ قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لاَ يُظْلَمُونَ

47. "And for every people there is a Messenger. Then when their Messenger comes, (***on the Day of Judgment***)***, the matter will be judged between them with justice, and they will not be dealt with unjustly."***

That is, for every group which follows a prescribed Path and has a common religion, like the nation (ummah) of Muhammad (S), the nation of Moses (as) and that of Jesus (as), there is a messenger and a prophet, whom Allah (s.w.t.) has appointed for them and has commissioned them to convey His message.

And when their prophet came and successfully conveyed His message, some denied him and others accepted him, and those who denied and refuted Him met their destruction and those who were believers were saved.

The verse says:

"And for every people there is a Messenger. Then when their Messenger comes, (***on the Day of Judgment***)***, the matter will be judged between them with justice, and they will not be dealt with unjustly."***

Surah Yunus – Verse 48

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَي هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

48. "They say: 'When will this promise be, if you are truthful?'"

The idolaters, ridiculing the prophets (as), used to ask them that if they were right, when the time would come for Allah's punishment. This humiliating way of asking questions was a sort of reinforcement for those individuals who might be affected by them. However, in order to realize that an action will occur, should one necessarily know its timing.

The verse says:

"They say: 'When will this promise be, if you are truthful?'"

Surah Yunus – Verse 49

قُل لاَ أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي ضَرّاً وَلا نَفْعاً إِلاَّ مَا شَآءَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ إِذَا جَآءَ أَجَلُهُمْ فَلاَ يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلايَسْتَقْدِمُونَ

49. "Say: 'I do not possess any harm or profit for myself except as Allah wills. To every people is a term appointed. When their term comes, then they shall neither put (***it***) ***off an hour, nor hasten*** (***it***)***.'"***

Facing this question, Allah orders His Prophet to provide them with an answer in several ways. The first step is that he should tell them that the timing for such a thing is not at his disposal. He is not the author or proprietor of any profit or loss for himself (much less for them) except those ordained or predetermined by Him.

The verse says:

"Say: 'I do not possess any harm or profit for myself except as Allah wills…"

Muhammad (S) should announce that he is His sole and only Messenger and Prophet. It is He who fixes the timing of the punishment which is within His power.

The above sentence alludes to the unity of actions which pre-supposes that all and every thing in this world eventually returns to Him, and when deviators are being punished with His justice, it is He Who sets the course of action.

Obviously, this does not contradict the stipulation that Allah has bestowed upon us powers and abilities by which we are entitled to partly gain or lose and to be able to make decisions regarding our own destiny.

Then, the Qur'an, referring to another issue, declares that each community and every tribe has a predetermined time of death and a point of its termination, which, when it comes, there will be no delay or advancement in its occurrence.

The verse continues saying:

"…To every people is a term appointed. When their term comes, then they shall neither put (it) off an hour, nor hasten (it).'"

In fact, the Qur'an warns the polytheists not to hasten and jump unduly to conclusions. When the timing of their death comes no delays or advances will happen.

Surah Yunus – Verse 50

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُهُ بَيَاتاً أَوْ نَهَاراً مَاذَا يَسْتَعْجِلُ مِنْهُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ

50. "Say: 'Have you considered? If His punishment comes upon you by night or by day, what portion of it will the sinners wish to hasten?'"

The Qur'an raises the third answer in this verse. It orders the Prophet (S) to tell the infidels that it is not improbable for Allah's punishment to come to them during the day-time or at night. Then, are they in a position to repel such a sudden punishment from themselves?

The verse says:

"Say: 'Have you considered? If His punishment comes upon you by night or by day, what portion of it will the sinners wish to hasten?'"

In this case, under what pretexts do the culprits and sinners make haste.

Upon this meaning, Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 71 says:

"And they say: 'when will this threat come to pass, if you are truthful?'"

Surah Yunus – Verse 51

أَثُمَّ إِذَا مَا وَقَعَ ءَامَنتُم بِهِ ءَآلآنَ وَقَدْ كُنتُم بِهِ تَستَعْجِلُونَ

51. "Is it when it** (**the punishment**) **comes to pass, you will believe in it? Ah! Now? And you wanted** (**aforetime**) **to hasten it on?"

The Qur'an provides the fourth answer for them in this noble verse, asking them whether they intend to believe in Him once the punishment emerges. (Faith established under such circumstances is fruitless).

They would be told implying that: '*Now, that the punishment has come, you have faith and supplicate and you repent while before this you were ridiculing and were hastily asking for the punishment.*'

The verse says:

"Is it when it** (**the punishment**) **comes to pass, you will believe in it? Ah! Now? And you wanted** (**aforetime**) **to hasten it on?"

Surah Yunus – Verse 52

ثُمَّ قِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ هَلْ تُجْزَوْنَ إِلاَّ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ

52. "Then it will be said to those who were unjust: 'Taste you the enduring punishment! Are you requited aught save what you used to earn?'"

Those who have oppressed themselves will be told on the Day of Resurrection that they should suffer eternal punishment in the Hereafter following their sufferings afflictions in the world.

The verse declares:

"Then it will be said to those who were unjust: 'Taste you the enduring punishment! Are you requited aught save what you used to earn?'"

It signifies that they have been called to accept the truth and they have been guided, after firm proofs were offered to them, removing all their pretexts and excuses.

They will be told that: they kept on insisting upon their infidelity and denial, and not abandoning their

misleading course. Now, it is time for they to receive punishment for their acts.

The reason why the term "***taste***" has been employed in connection with suffering punishment is that this sense has a stronger effect on man than the other senses.

Surah Yunus – Verse 53

وَيَسْتَنْبِئُونَكَ أَحَقٌّ هُوَ قُلْ إِي وَرَبِّي إِنَّهُ لَحَقٌّ وَمَآ أَنتُم بِمُعْجِزِينَ

53. "And they ask you to inform them saying: 'Is that true?' Say: 'You! by my Lord! Verily it is the truth; and you cannot frustrate (Him)'."

The words in the foregoing holy verses were about the punishment and suffering of the wrongdoers both in this world and in the world hereafter. This verse also follows that same topic.

At first, the Qur'an implies that the wrongdoers and the idolaters regard the Prophet (S) with astonishment as to whether the promise of the divine punishment in this world and the Hereafter is true.

The verse says:

"And they ask you to inform them saying: 'Is that true?'..."

Allah commands His Prophet (S) to answer them emphatically saying that his answer is positive and he swears by his Lord that this is a reality and there is no doubt about it.

And if they think, they can escape the divine punishment, they have committed a grave mistake, for they will never be able (to prevent it) and make Him unable to act.

The verse continues saying:

"...Say: 'You! by my Lord! Verily it is the truth; and you cannot frustrate (Him)'."

Section 6: The Divine Mercy Precedes the Wrath

Surah Yunus – Verse 54

وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِكُلّ نَفْسٍ ظَلَمَتْ مَا فِي الأَرْضِ لافْتَدَتْ بِهِ وَأَسَرُّوا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ وَقُضِيِ بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لا يُظْلَمُونَ

54. “And if every soul that has done injustice had all that is on earth, he would assuredly give it in ransom, and they declare (their) remorse when they see the Penalty. But the judgment between them will be with justice, and they will not be dealt with unjustly.”

The proper magnitude of this punishment is particularly emphasized in this verse concerning the Day of Judgment, where it implies that the divine punishment is so awe-inspiring and horrible that if each of the oppressors owned the entire wealth of the world, he would have paid all of it so as to be relieved from the harsh punishment awaiting him.

The verse says:

“And if every soul that has done injustice had all that is on earth, he would assuredly give it in ransom...”

In fact they are ready to offer the greatest bribes imaginable in order to relieve themselves from the divine chastisement and to diminish the slightest possible portion of His punishment. However, it will never be accepted from them.

Some of these Divine punishments are particularly spiritual in nature; that is, when they behold the punishment, they would declare their regret[1].

The verse continues saying:

“...and they declare (their) remorse when they see the Penalty...”

Then the Qur’an stresses that despite everything, justice will prevail and will be administered fairly among them and no oppression will be inflicted upon them.

The verse says:

“...But the judgment between them will be with justice, and they will not be dealt with unjustly.”

Surah Yunus – Verse 55

أَلآ إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ والأَرْضِ أَلآ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

55. “Behold! Verily to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. Behold! Verily, Allah’s promise is true, but most of them do not know.”

Then for the reason that people may consider these Divine promises and threats seriously and know that Allah is not unable to do such things, the Qur’an says that whatsoever is in the heavens and on the earth are His, His Lordship and His realm of administration encompasses the world of existence in its entirety

and no one can be excluded from His zone of jurisdiction.

The verse says:

"Behold! Verily to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth..."

And again, beware that Allah's promise (concerning punishment of the wrongdoers) is just, though many people (whose unconscious ignorance has darkened their souls) do not know this fact.

The verse continues saying:

"...Behold! Verily, Allah's promise is true, but most of them do not know."

Surah Yunus – Verse 56

هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

56. "He (it is Who) gives life and causes to die, and to Him you shall be returned."

This verse also lays again an emphasis upon the problematic issue of life. It indicates that it is Allah Who enlivens and makes one die.

Therefore, He is able to cause death unto the servants as well as having the power to enliven them on the Day of Resurrection for the Court of Judgment.

The verse says:

"He (it is Who) gives life and causes to die..."

And ultimately, all of you will return to Him in order to receive the reward of all your deeds there.

The verse continues saying:

"...and to Him you shall be returned."

And you will receive the rewards for all the deeds you have done then and there.

Surah Yunus – Verse 57

يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَتْكُم مَوْعِظَةٌ مِن رَبِّكُمْ وَشِفَآءٌ لِمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًي وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

57. "O mankind! There hath come to you an admonition from your Lord and a healing for what is

in your hearts, and a guidance and a mercy for the believers."

The Arabic term /mau'izah/ (preaching) means to restrain intermingled with warning and awakening. The Arabic phrase /šifa'-is-Sudur/ refers to the purification of spirit and heart from spiritual evils. The spiritual defects are more grievous than the diseases of the body. The Qur'an's advantage lies in this very healing the spiritual diseases.

The verse says:

"O mankind! There hath come to you an admonition from your Lord and a healing for what is in your hearts..."

The verse seems to allude to the four kinds of stages that shape education and development, that is:

1. The preaching stage against visible acts.

2. The purification stage for purging the soul from ethical and social evils.

3. The self-guiding stage towards those objectives which signify worldly happiness and the happiness and prosperity in the Hereafter.

4. The stage of receiving divine blessings which is forgiveness and Paradise. In the meantime, the Qur'an is wholly preaching on a general level, however, only those groups that seek will be covered by the divine blessings.

The verse says:

"...and a guidance and a mercy for the believers."

Finally, the cure for all pains must be sought after in the school of the Qur'an; not from the schools of the East and West.

"...and a healing for what is in your hearts..."

This is the reason why, Allah's Prophet (S) in a tradition states:

"When afflictions, like a dark and terrible night, invade you, seek refuge in the Qur'an." It is simultaneously full of preaching as well as being a remedy, a source of illumination and blessing all at the same time."

Surah Yunus – Verse 58

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَٰلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ

58. "Say: 'In the grace of Allah, and in His mercy – in that let them rejoice; it is better than that which they hoard'."

What is apparently revealed in this verse, if we consider the previous verse about the Qur'an as a source of healing and preaching, is the appeal to the Qur'an which is the purpose of Allah's grace and mercy. As Imam Ali (as) says:

"On the Day of Resurrection, a voice will be heard that every farmer will be busy with some kind of pest except those who had sowed in the field of the Qur'an. Thus, sow your seeds in the field of the Qur'an."[2]

The Prophet (S) said:

"He who has been honoured by Allah to be introduced to the blessings of Islam and the understanding of the Qur'an, but feels miserable is miserable indeed, and will be labeled so until the Day of Resurrection", then he recited this verse.[3]

This is meant to say that once a person benefits from the blessings of Islam and the Qur'an, he is no longer poor and he enjoys the greatest wealth. Likewise, it has been narrated from the Prophet (S) who said:

"Refer to the Qur'an so that your life becomes enriched like the lives of happy people and your death becomes similar to those of the martyrs and you are saved from the terror on the Day of Resurrection.

For the Qur'an, is surely the word of the Compassionate (Allah) which guards against Satan, and favourably balances one's acts during the Day of Judgment"[4]

Incidentally, 'grace' and 'mercy' mentioned in the Qur'an have been interpreted as prophethood and Imamate.[5] Also the former has sometimes been interpreted as the general divine blessings and the latter has been interpreted as His specific blessings.

According to an Islamic tradition, divine grace has been pointed out as Islam and His mercy is the Qur'an. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Divine grace consists of |salawat| and His mercy is Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as)."[6]

The verse says:

"Say: 'In the grace of Allah, and in His mercy..."

Finally, we must be happy for all the divine blessings, especially the fact that He has blessed us with prophethood of Muhammad (S) and Imamate of the Immaculate Imams (as) and we must know that spiritual blessings are superior to all the material ones.

The verse continues saying:

"...in that let them rejoice, it is better than that which they hoard'."

Surah Yunus – Verse 59

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُم مَآ أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُم مِن رِزْقٍ فَجَعَلْتُمْ مِنْهُ حَرَاماً وَحَلاَلاً قُلْ ءَآللَّهُ أَذِنَ لَكُمْ أَمْ عَلَي اللَّهِ تَفْتَرُونَ

59. "Say: 'Have you considered what (things) Allah has sent down for you of sustenance, then you made some of it unlawful, and (some of it) lawful?' Say: 'Has Allah permitted you, or do you forge a lie against Allah?'"

There have been mentioned in Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 103 some examples of those unreasonable prohibitions which the polytheists invented. They used to lay aside part of their crops for their idols and idol-temples, thus making it forbidden for them.

They also used to forbid whatever was in the wombs of animals for women while making them lawful for the use of men. The Qur'an completely rejects all these superstitions.

The verse says:

"Say: 'Have you considered what (things) Allah has sent down for you of sustenance, then you made some of it unlawful, and (some of it) lawful?' Say: 'Has Allah permitted you, or do you forge a lie against Allah?'"

The main general principle upon the edible things is that they are lawful to be eaten, except those whose being unlawful is proved by religion.

We should also know that divine legislation is particular to Allah, the legislator, and no one is right to precede the lawgiver. Similar to the case no divine unlawful thing can be changed into a lawful one, the lawful things cannot be counted unlawful either.

However, to legislate an innovative law is a crime, and to forge it against Allah is another crime.

Surah Yunus – Verse 60

وَمَا ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَي اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَي النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لاَ يَشْكُرُونَ

60. "And what imagine those who forge lies against Allah, on the Day of Resurrection? Verily Allah is the Lord of bounty to mankind, but most of them are not thankful."

In the previous verse, the act of certain prohibitions done by some people was criticized. In this verse we

encounter Allah's superiority and His uncountable Divine favors that deserve our gratitude, and at the same time, we are also criticized in all those cases where thanksgiving is lacking and false accusations are directed towards Allah.

The verse says:

"And what imagine those who forge lies against Allah, on the Day of Resurrection? Verily Allah is the Lord of bounty to mankind..."

To ascribe false accusations towards Allah (s.w.t.) is a sin deserving of punishment. One must not make light the chance and respite that Allah has provided man in this world; neither must we forget and be oblivious to the Court of Justice which will be established on the Day of Judgment.

Prohibition of Divine blessings is a repulsive act and leads one to deprivation in this world and brings shame and devastating consequences on the Day of Resurrection.

Almighty Allah has done the utmost in being forgiving and kind towards man, though most people turn a blind eye to all those favors. They rarely engage in thanksgiving, thus paving the way for the utter denial and refutation of the fact that it is He who has provided all those favors.

The verse says:

"...but most of them are not thankful."

1. Some of the commentators have translated the Qur'anic word /'asarru/, mentioned in the verse under discussion, by its first lexical meaning which is: 'To conceal', while referring to the explanations of the Arabic Dictionary: Mufradat by Raqib, and also Lisan-ul-'Arab, it is realized that this word has opposite meanings: 'to conceal' as well as 'to express, declare and appear'. Keeping the whole verses of the Qur'an in mind, this fact is clear that on the Day of Hereafter everything is manifest and no one will be able to conceal a thing from others, (here, their regret), or to behave so that he can escape from the reality. That is why the latter meaning has been chosen for the word /'asarru/ in this verse.
2. Nahjul-Balaghah, Sermon 17.
3. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the
4. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 89, p. 19
5. Tafsir-ul-Burhan, vol. 2, p. 187
6. Tafsir-us-Safi, vol. 2, p. 407

Section 7: No Fear or Grief for the Friends of Allah

Surah Yunus – Verse 61

وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأْنٍ وَمَا تَتْلُواْ مِنْهُ مِن قُرْءَانٍ وَلا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلاَّ كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُوداً إِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ وَمَا يَعْزُبُ عَن رَبِّكَ مِن مِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ فِي السَّمَآءِ وَلاَ أَصْغَرَ مِن ذَلِكَ وَلاَ أَكْبَرَ إِلاَّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

61. "And you are not (engaged) in any affair, nor do you recite any part from the Qur'an, and nor any deed you (mankind) may be doing, but We are Witnesses over you when you enter into it. Nor is there hidden from your Lord (so much as) the weight of an atom on the earth or in the heaven, not anything lesser than that or greater but are (recorded) in a Clear Book."

The "***Clear Book***" is the 'Preserved Tablet' or Allah's Comprehensive Knowledge which covers the entire cosmos including not only the actions of human beings but also the smallest details of everything in the heavens and the earth.

With the utmost subtlety and eloquence, this verse announces that Allah is not only fully aware of the minutest facts in the heavens and the earth but He is also fully aware of the minutest details of the actions of his subjects.

Whatever the mood or state of meditation or an important affair you might be in, whatever part of the Qur'an you might be engaged in reciting, and whatever action you begin, you can do nothing which cannot be seen or noticed by Allah when you start it.

The verse says:

"And you are not (engaged) in any affair, nor do you recite any part from the Qur'an, and nor any deed you (mankind) may be doing, but We are Witnesses over you when you enter into it…"

Then more emphatically, it continues by saying that not slightest thing in the heavens and on earth, even that of an insignificant particle or greater than it can be hidden from Allah. All of these are recorded and registered in the Preserved Tablet and in the Open Book of Allah.

It continues saying:

"…Nor is there hidden from your Lord (so much as) the weight of an atom on the earth or in the heaven, not anything lesser than that or greater but are (recorded) in a Clear Book."

All Muslims are taught a great lesson by this verse, which can place them on the right track, leading them toward the Truth and preventing them from going astray.

It calls our attention to the fact that not only does the Almighty comprehend our every thought, word and deed, but His angels are also carefully watching every step we take, every word we utter, every thought

we entertain in our heads, wherever we cast our eyes, and in whatever state we are in.

It is not without proper grounds that Imam Sadiq (a.s) said:

"The Prophet of Islam (S) whenever reading this verse, used to weep greatly".

If the Prophet of Islam (S), with all his sincerity and gratitude, with all the services he had rendered human beings, and with all his unparalleled worship of the Creator could be so concerned about his imperfections before Allah, how then, can we determine our state?

Surah Yunus – Verses 62 - 64

أَلآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللَّهِ لاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَي فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الآخِرَةِ لا تَبْدِيلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

62. "Behold! Verily no fear shall be upon the friends of Allah, nor shall they grieve;"
63. "Those who believe and constantly keep from evil."
64. "For them are Glad Tidings in this world's life and in the Hereafter. There is no change in the Words of Allah. That is the great success."

In the previous verses, some of the characteristics of the polytheists and non-believers were explained, from now on, the characteristics of the true believers and those who struggle and strive, who constantly guard against evil and who are the exact opposite of the first group will be described.

The verse attracts the attentions implying that there is no fear among the men of Allah and they will have no sorrows.

The verse says:

"Behold! Verily no fear shall be upon the friends of Allah, nor shall they grieve;"

Here sorrows and fears are those that relate to worldly matters for Allah's worshippers are imbued with the owe of Him. This kind of fear is concerned with one's failure to carry out ones duties and responsibilities and that kind of sorrow which one feels towards his lack of achievements during the course of his life.

Here fear and sorrow have spiritual connotations, which help in man's perfection and development. This

is quite contrary to the fear and sorrow that have a material basis and is the source of degradation and deviations.

The friends of Allah are those whose position requires no boundaries between them and their Lord and they are not distant from Him. Their hearts are open and unveiled and they see Him with all their hearts through the light of knowledge, faith, and good deeds which leaves them with perfect sincerity.

It is because of such an acquaintance with Allah that, in their views, anything else other than Him is insignificant, of little value, and ephemeral.

The verse says:

"Those who believe and constantly keep from evil."

They are those who have become believers, continuously strive after virtue and make continence their habit.

For them there is good news both in this world and in the Hereafter, because there are no changes in the Divine words and promises, for Allah always fulfils the promises He has made to His friends. This is a great victory and happiness for the person concerned.

The verse says:

"For them are Glad Tidings in this world's life and in the Hereafter. There is no change in the Words of Allah. That is the great success."

Surah Yunus – Verse 65

وَلا يَحْزُنْكَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعاً هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

65. "And let not their speech grieve you. Verily the glory is wholly Allah's; He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

As a good end awaits those who observe continence, the attainment of this goal requires one to pass through some great difficulties. Among them is that one can cite the struggle which the faithful experience within their hearts in the process of overthrowing and revising their aspirations.

This can tend to make them feel hopeless, giving them the impression that the oppressors can overcome them. But this is not so, Allah, the Exalted in Majesty informs us that we must not let the oppressors make us sorrowful. The Majesty is entirely His.

It is He Who is All-Hearing and Omniscient. This good news only applies to those whose existence

embodies the characteristics of the friends of Allah.

The verse says:

"And let not their speech grieve you. Verily the glory is wholly Allah's; He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

In the Islamic texts one reads that:

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali-ibn-Abi-Talib (as) once was asked about the meaning of Allah's words when He says: ***"Behold! Verily no fear shall be upon the friends of Allah, nor shall they grieve"***, and who the friends of Allah were.

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen answered:

"The friends of Allah are those who are sincere in their worship, they are cognizant of the depth of those matters that are of the world, whereas others attach importance to the outward appearance of the world. These believe in the idea of the permanent character of the world while the others do not believe in its lack of permanence..."[1]

It is also narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who said that it is written in Imam Sajjad's (as), book concerning the friends of Allah that they are those who accomplish their religious obligations, and act according to the practice of Allah's Messenger (S).

They are those who abstain from all that is forbidden, and have let the transient world go by, while they are only interested in what is dear to Allah. They make a living in accordance with the laws which consider these ways of earning a livelihood lawful.

They abhor arrogance, shun the hoarding of wealth and pay all the obligatory religious dues. Allah has blessed them all for what they earn, and He has also fixed a great reward for what they have saved in advance for their life in Hereafter.

Surah Yunus – Verse 66

أَلا إِنَّ لِلّهِ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَات وَمَن فِي الأَرْضِ وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللّهِ شُرَكَاء إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلاَّ الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلاَّ يَخْرُصُونَ

66. "Behold! Verily to Allah belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth, and they do not follow any associates, who call on others besides Allah, they do not follow (anything) but conjectures, and they only lie."

Be aware that whosoever is in the heavens and on the earth belongs to Allah and is under His

domination. The use of word /man/, mentioned in this holy verse (and we translated it as whoever), signifies wise and intelligent men.

That is, those who have been provided with intelligence and live in the heavens and on the earth are all under Allah's power and control. When the rule is that all intelligent people, as individuals among His creation, must belong to Him, it follows that other existing beings should also follow the rule and they also belong to Allah.

The fact that He specializes "the intelligent" as a separate category signifies their elevation and magnification in that position.

The verse says:

"Behold! Verily to Allah belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth…"

Those who follow idols are those who consider them as partners with Allah.

The verse continues saying:

"…and they do not follow any associates, who call on others besides Allah…"

Those who select partners for Allah, follow nothing but their own conjectures simply following their forefathers in this case or it is because of mistake they have made thinking that they approach Allah therewith. If they think they can elevate themselves and approach Allah in this way, they do nothing but lie.

The verse says:

"…they do not follow (anything) but conjectures, and they only lie."

Surah Yunus – Verse 67

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِراً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ

67. "He it is Who appointed for you the night that you rest in it, and the day giving light. Verily there are signs in it for people who hearken."

After rejecting all the partners of the polytheists, in calling the polytheists' attention to His magnitude and His blessings, the Qur'an implies that Allah made the night dark and the day illuminated so that they may find silence and comfort during the night and make their living and earn their sustenance during the day.

The verse says:

“He it is Who appointed for you the night that you rest in it, and the day giving light…”

Truly, these are clear proofs and reasons attesting to the Unity of Allah, the Glorified, for no one else is able to do all this.

The verse continues saying:

“…Verily there are signs in it for people who hearken.”

Surah Yunus – Verse 68

قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَداً سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ إِنْ عِندَكُم مِن سُلْطَانٍ بِهَذَآ أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَي اللَّهِ مَا لا تَعْلَمُونَ

68. “They say, ‘Allah has begotten a son!’ Glory be to Him! He is Self-Sufficient! His is whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth! No warrant have you for this! Do you say about Allah what you do not know?’”

‘To beget a son’ signifies ‘to be the father of someone, which differs from giving birth and having children. The polytheists considered the angels as the daughters of Allah, and the Jews took “Ezra” as an offspring of Allah, while the Christians called Jesus the Son of Allah.

Allah is neither afraid of being lonely so as to want to adopt an offspring, nor does He need any heir to adopt a son. He also does not need any help so that He chooses an assistant, nor does He need to ensure the survival of His species, so He does not need a son. The verse says:

“They say, ‘Allah has begotten a son!’ Glory be to Him! He is Self-Sufficient!…”

This phrase, means that Allah is absolutely self sufficient and He is absolutely far from what they say, because whatever is in the heavens and on the earth are His and fall under His command.

The verse says:

“…His is whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth!…”

Thus He absolutely does not need to have a son, for begetting offspring is to relieve oneself from one’s lack of ability and weakness or to enrich oneself and get rid of poverty, but Allah is free from all this. If it is impossible for Him to have a real son, it is also impossible for Him to adopt a stepson and there are no reasons to support the authenticity of this claim.

It says:

“…No warrant have you for this! Do you say about Allah what you do not know?’”

If one wants to know about Allah, these words are to be regarded as blame, a censure and a threat from Allah, the Magnificent, to those who have made these unsanctioned and atrocious claims.

Surah Yunus – Verses 69 – 70

قُلْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَي اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لا يُفْلِحُونَ

مَتَاعٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ نُذِيقُهُمُ الْعَذَابَ الشَّدِيدَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ

69. "Say: 'Verily those who forge a lie against Allah will not prosper.'"
70. "(They have) a little enjoyment in this world, then to Us will be their return, then shall We make them taste the severe penalty because they used to disbelieve."

Here the Holy Qur'an mentions the ultimate disastrous end for all those who ascribe belies and false concepts to Allah. He addresses His Prophet (S) that he should tell those who make false ascriptions to Him and those who make them only lie that they will not be saved.

The verse says:

"Say: 'Verily those who forge a lie against Allah will not prosper.'"

They might be able to attain worldly wealth through lies and false claims for a few days, but it is only a passing phenomenon in this world.[2] They will eventually return to Allah and He will punish them vigorously for their disbelief and their associating partners with Him.

The verse says:

"(They have) a little enjoyment in this world, then to Us will be their return, then shall We make them taste the severe penalty because they used to disbelieve."

1. The of Al-Mizan, the explanation upon the verse
2. The Arabic words /mata'/ and /mut'ah/ are employed for short-term use. As man's use of the world and its blessings are short-lived, the Qur'an then applies the word /mata'/cornering worldly affairs.

Section 8: The Ministries of Noah and Moses

Referred to

Surah Yunus – Verse 71

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ نُوحٍ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ يَاقَوْمِ إِن كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكُم مَقَامِي وَتَذْكِيرِي بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَعَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ فَأَجْمِعُوا أَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ لا يَكُنْ أَمْرُكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً ثُمَّ اقْضُوا إِلَيَّ وَلا تُنظِرُونِ

71. "And recite to them the story of Noah when he said to his people: 'O my people! if my stay (with you) and my reminding you of the Signs of Allah is grievous to you, yet I have put my trust in Allah, so resolve on your affair, with your partners, so that your affair be not dubious to you. Then make decision on me, and give me no respite.'"

Allah the Exalted had commissioned His prophet that he should relate the news of the people of Noah to them, because this verse indicates that Noah (as) used to receive support and encouragement from Divine sources, which made him not fear the threats and strategies of the enemy.

Noah announces if listening to his useful instructions and advice with demonstrations and reasoning concerning the authenticity of Monotheism, Justice, prophethood and Resurrection are difficult and unbearable for them, and thus they have decided to kill him or they intend to cast him out, he does put all his hopes and trust in Allah, in which case, he will leave his fate in His will, with the conviction that He will save him from their wickedness and vice.

The verse says:

"And recite to them the story of Noah when he said to his people: 'O my people! if my stay (with you) and my reminding you of the Signs of Allah is grievous to you, yet I have put my trust in Allah..."

Hadrat Noah then threw out a powerful challenge saying that they should collect their thoughts and invite their idols to participate in their decision-making so that nothing should be left hidden from them, there should be no ambiguity remaining in their plans, they should make the appropriate decisions and come up with the best stratagem concerning him.

The verse continues saying:

"...so resolve on your affair, with your partners, so that your affair be not dubious to you..."

Noah (as) added telling them if they were able, they should go ahead and put an end to his life, and not spare him a single moment. Here is his statement:

"...Then make decision on me, and give me no respite.'"

It has been narrated that before noon on the Day of Ashura Imam Hussein (as) also recited this very verse to the Kufan army.

This is a lesson for all Islamic leaders who might feel daunted when confronted by a multitude of enemies, rather; they must, by taking recourse to Allah and appealing to Him, with utmost decisiveness challenge them and humiliate them their power which would reinforce the morale of their followers and lower that of their enemies.

Surah Yunus – Verse 72

فإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَمَا سَأَلْتُكُم مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلاَّ عَلَي اللَّهِ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

72. "But if you turn back, I have not asked you for any recompense, my recompense is only upon Allah, and I am commanded to be of those (who) surrender (unto Him)."

Anxieties often revolve around either one's life or one's wealth. In the foregoing verse, the issue in question centers on the conspiracy of their enemies with regard to the lives of the prophets. The issue dealt with in this verse relates to the prophets' lack of expectations for reward and wealth from the side of people.

Noah (as) in this verse announced that if the unbelievers were to turn away from the truth, not accepting or following it, he did not expect any rewards for bringing them the message. This was his mission, so they should not balk at acceptance for fear of feeling that they would end up owing him something, which would be burdensome to them.

The verse says:

"But if you turn back, I have not asked you for any recompense, my recompense is only upon Allah..."

The verse also implies that if they turn away from accepting his words, he would not be at a disadvantage for he was not after their wealth (he did not covet) so that their turning away would put him at a loss, on the contrary, their rejection would turn out to be at their own disadvantage.

He emphasized that his reward for the prophetic mission and its accomplishment lay with Allah alone.

And Allah, the Gracious, had commissioned Noah (as) to be among those who had submitted themselves to His commandments for, indeed, the best of what the servants of Allah can practice is to obey and submit to Him.

The verse continues as follows:

"...and I am commanded to be of those (who) surrender (unto Him)."

Surah Yunus – Verse 73

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَمَن مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلْكِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ خَلآئِفَ وَأَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُنذَرِينَ

73. "But they rejected him (Noah), So We delivered him and those with him, in the Ark, and We made them successors (in the earth), and We overwhelmed those who rejected Our Signs. Then see what was the end of the warned ones."

The Holy Qur'an presents the final destiny of Noah's enemies and veracity of his prediction in the following way. The enemies refuted Noah while Allah saved him and all those who were with him in the Ark. Not only did He save them but He also replaced the oppressors by them and drowned all those who had denied His Signs.

The verse says:

"But they rejected him (Noah), So We delivered him and those with him, in the Ark, and We made them successors (in the earth), and We overwhelmed those who rejected Our Signs..."

Turning to the Prophet (S), Allah finally commands him that he should consider the ultimate destiny of those who did not heed the divine warning and threats and were swept away.

The verse says:

"...Then see what was the end of the warned ones."

Noah's companions were only eighty in number whilst the numbers of the unbelievers were manifold, however, by the grace of Allah, the Almighty, the unbelievers were annihilated and the faithful became the inheritors of the earth.

Surah Yunus – Verse 74

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِن بَعْدِهِ رُسُلاً إِلَي قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَآءُوهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا بِهِ مِن قَبْلُ كَذَلِكَ نَطْبَعُ عَلَي قُلُوبِ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

74. "Then, after him, We sent messengers to their people; they brought them the clear evidences, but they would not believe in what they had already rejected beforehand. Thus do We seal up the

hearts of the transgressors."

In these verses, Allah, the Gracious, recounts the stories of those prophets who had been appointed after Noah (as).

After Noah and the annihilation of his people, several prophets were dispatched to their peoples who, as a result of marriage and reproduction, had multiplied by that time. The purpose here is prophets 'Ibrahim, Hud, Saleh, Lot, and Shu'ayb (Jethro).

These prophets went to those people with clear proofs and miracles that testified to their prophecy and provided reasons for their truthfulness.

The verse says:

"Then, after him, We sent messengers to their People; they brought them the clear evidences..."

However, none of them any longer believed in what their divinely guided forefathers had believed. Just like the idol worshippers before them, they were also rebellious and stood in opposition to Divine guidance.

The verse continues saying:

"...but they would not believe in what they had already rejected beforehand..."

The holy phrase saying: 'Thus do We seal the hearts of the transgressors' means that Allah (s.w.t.) impresses the symbol of infidelity upon the hearts of those who do injustice against themselves and violate the Divine limits and laws laid down by the Almighty, so that they become condemned to reprimand, and are recognized by the angels.

The verse says:

"...Thus do We seal up the hearts of the transgressors."

Surah Yunus – Verse 75

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِن بَعْدِهِم مُوسَي وَهَارُونَ إِلَي فِرْعَوْنَ وَملإِيْهِ بِآَيَاتِنَا فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْماً مُجْرِمِينَ

75. "Then, after them, We sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and his chiefs with Our Signs, but they were arrogant, and they were a guilty people."

The meaning of the Arabic word /mala'/ is the eye-caching splendour of the courtiers and palace residents who were among the Pharaoh's entourage.

Pharaoh had divided the society into two categories: The Coptic palace-dwellers and the Sebti paupers. He had enslaved one group and the other group resided in wealth and luxury.

The primary crime of Pharaoh was his claim to being a god, and of putting innocent boys to death and letting the girls live.

Fighting against arrogant autocrats has been a major activity of the prophets, for they fight the causes of corruption not only what is caused by it.

The verse says:

"Then, after them, We sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and his chiefs with Our Signs, but they were arrogant, and they were a guilty people."

Surah Yunus – Verse 76

فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِندِنَا قَالُوا إِنَّ هَذَا لَسِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ

76. "So when the truth came to them from Us, they said: 'Verily, this is a manifest sorcery.'"

The Essence of Allah, the prophets, the divine laws, miracles and whatever is attributed to Him are all true and real.

People do not always go after the truth. The adherents of the truth must sometimes go after the people.

The Prophets entertain a direct link with the Lord and their miracles as well as their program have their origins in the Divine nature.

However, accusing someone to be a magician is the shrewdest, simplest and the most prevalent of the accusations leveled against the prophets. It is for this reason that Moses (as) was personally accused of being a sorcerer.

The verse says:

"So when the truth came to them from Us, they said: 'Verily, this is a manifest sorcery.'"

Surah Yunus – Verse 77

قَالَ مُوسَي أَتَقُولُونَ لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَآءَكُمْ أَسِحْرٌ هَذَا وَلاَ يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُونَ

77. "Said Moses: 'Do you say* (this) *about the Truth when it hath actually reached you? Is this

sorcery? But sorcerers do not prosper.'"

Moses asked the disbelievers why it was that when the Signs of truth reached them they kept claiming it was sorcery. Moses rejects the allegations that the Signs accompanying him were the products of sorcery, for sorcery is not like this, these were Signs of the Truth and independent investigation could vouch for that.

The verse says:

"Said Moses: 'Do you say* (*this*) *about the Truth when it hath actually reached you? Is this sorcery?..."

However, they did not want to submit to the Truth, even if this truth had reached them from Allah. They claimed that the proofs that Moses brought was sorcery and simple-hearted people did not discriminate between sorcery and prophecy since both involved elements contrary to nature and habit. It was for this reason that they became confused, mixing the two which led many astray.

In such a case, people must be armed with knowledge so as to be able to distinguish miracle from magic and not to be so dominated by the confusion that sorcerers cause and reject the issue of prophecy. However this is a fact that sorcerers do not succeed.

The verse says:

"...But sorcerers do not prosper.'"

Surah Yunus – Verse 78

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا لِتَلْفِتَنَا عَمَّا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ ءَابآءَنَا وَتَكُونَ لَكُمَا الْكِبْرِيَآءُ فِي الأَرْضِ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكُمَا بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

78. "They said: '*(*O' Moses*) *have you come to turn us away from what we found our fathers upon, and that the greatness in the land may be for you two? But we shall not believe you two."

The people of Pharaoh continued their accusations against Moses, explicitly accusing him and Aaron of wanting them to abandon the ways of their ancestors.

They brought up the issues of ancestral traditions, and their fabulous glory to influence public opinion against Moses and Aaron, implying that they wanted to belittle and ridicule the sacred objects and symbols of their society and country.

They maintained then that Moses' call to Allah's religion and divinely inspired way was nothing but a lie. They claimed all of them were simply part of a stratagem of Moses and Aaron to seize power over the land and to put the reins of domination in their hands.

In fact, as they themselves made every effort to rule the earth oppressively, using all kinds of underhanded ways of seizing power, they ended up thinking of others as they thought of themselves, which included the struggles of the reformists and prophets.

The verse says:

"They said: '(O' Moses) have you come to turn us away from what we found our fathers upon, and that the greatness in the land may be for you two?..."

For this reason they said that they were never going to believe in Moses for they thought his message and proofs were only but the act of sorcery in the service of a wider scheme for political aggrandizement. This was the first stage of their struggle against Moses (as).

The verse continues saying:

"...But we shall not believe you two."

Surah Yunus – Verse 79

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ائْتُونِي بِكُلِّ سَاحِرٍ عَلِيمٍ

79. "And Pharaoh said: 'Bring unto me every knowing (expert) sorcerer'."

In witnessing the miracles of Moses (as), he had been rendered wretched and helpless in trying to find a way to remove them, Pharaoh, addressing his people, put the call out that all the best sorcerers in the land should come to him in order to get them to help him nullify Moses' miracles.

The verse says:

"And Pharaoh said: 'Bring unto me every knowing (expert) sorcerer'."

Of course, Pharaoh did so in order that the sorcerers could help him in dismissing the achievement of Moses (as), and thus he called on all of them because he did not want any craft of magic or sorcery to remain hidden from him which might be of potential use in combating what he perceived to be the powerful sorcery of Moses, little knowing that the Signs that Moses manifested were not the effects of sorcery and magic but miracles originating from Allah.

Surah Yunus – Verse 80

فَلَمَّا جَآءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالَ لَهُم مُّوسَي أَلْقُوا مَآ أَنتُم مُّلْقُونَ

80. "When the sorcerers came, Moses said to them: 'Throw what you have to throw!'"

Pharaoh wanted to render the divine movement of Moses inactive with the help of those expert sorcerers. They carried instruments and devices like ropes, wood etc, which by being mixed with some particular materials moved when the sunshine affected them.

On the day when it was appointed for this historical challenge and a common invitation had also issued, a great crowd gathered. Then Moses addressed the sorcerers and told them to cast what they could cast.

The verse says:

"When the sorcerers came, Moses said to them: 'Throw what you have to throw!'"

Surah Yunus – Verses 81 - 82

فَلَمَّآ أَلْقَوْا قَالَ مُوسَي مَا جِئْتُم بِهِ السِّحْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَيُبْطِلُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يُصْلِحُ عَمَلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

وَيُحِقُّ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ

81. "So when they had thrown, Moses said: 'What you have brought is sorcery. Allah will surely make it naught, verily Allah does not set right the work of mischief makers."
82. "And Allah proves the Truth by His Words though the sinners be averse (to it)."

Falsehood may have a parade and flaunt for a short time, but, at last, it is condemned to extinction. Allah does not support and improve the affairs of the mischief-makers. A sorcerer is a mischief-maker, and sorcery is a corruption. Therefore, it must be opposed with.

The verse says:

"So when they had thrown, Moses said: 'What you have brought is sorcery. Allah will surely make it naught, verily Allah does not set right the work of mischief makers."

Then Allah proclaims in the verse that Moses told them that he would definitely triumph in that quarrel and combat, for Allah had promised to unveil the truth and, through decisive logic and the astounding miracles of His prophets, He would expose the scandals of those who incite corruption even though some of the evil-doers, such as Pharaoh and his supporters, would dislike that.

The verse says:

"And Allah proves the Truth by His Words though the sinners be averse (to it)."

Section 9: Moses Takes Away the Children of Israel

Surah Yunus – Verse 83

فَمَآ ءَامَنَ لِمُوسَي إِلاَّ ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِن قَوْمِهِ عَلَي خَوْفٍ مِن فِرْعَوْنَ وَملإِيْهِمْ أَن يَفْتِنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ لَعَالٍ فِي الأَرْضِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

83. "But none believed in Moses save some children of his people, because of the fear of Pharaoh and his chiefs, that they would torment them; and verily, Pharaoh was mighty on the earth, and verily, he was of the extravagant."

In the beginning, the Qur'an describes the situation of the first group of those who believed in Moses, saying that after this (event) no one believed in Moses except a group of his own offspring. This tiny group, which becomes apparent by use of the Qur'anic word /ḏurriyah/ (children), was formed mostly from among the youth and young adolescents.

They were under tremendous pressure from the side of Pharaoh and his associates, and feared the Pharaohnic system which, by putting pressure upon the believers tried to dissuade them, and make them quit the religion of Moses.

The verse says:

"But none believed in Moses save some children of his people, because of the fear of Pharaoh and his chiefs, that they would torment them;..."

Pharaoh was an arrogant man in that land, indulgent and violent, and he recognized no boundaries and limits.

The verse continues saying:

"...and verily, Pharaoh was mighty on the earth, and verily, he was of the extravagant."

Surah Yunus – Verse 84

وَقَالَ مُوسَي يَاقَوْمِ إِن كُنتُمْ ءَامَنتُم بِاللَّهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنتُم مُسْلِمِينَ

84. “And Moses said: “O my people! If you have (really) believed in Allah, then put trust in Him (alone) if you have surrendered (unto Him).”

To comfort them and alleviate their pain in their souls, Moses, soothingly and affectionately said to them, that if they believed in Allah they should staunchly stand by their words, have faith, and submit to Him by putting all their hopes and trust in Him.

They ought not to be fearful of the waves and the storm of afflictions, for Faith cannot be separated from trust in Allah (s.w.t.).

The real meaning of “trust”, here, is leaving one’s tasks in His hands and selecting Him as one’s only true help in the times of adversity.

The significance of trust does not imply abandoning one’s struggle, rather, it means that once man has done his utmost in struggling and has not been able to solve his difficulty, he must not be upset. He must rely upon Allah’s favor, support, and seek help from His pure Essence. He must have fortitude and continue on in his everlasting struggle.

The above holy verse says:

“And Moses said: “O my people! If you have (really) believed in Allah, then put trust in Him (alone) if you have surrendered (unto Him).”

Surah Yunus – Verse 85

فَقَالُوا عَلَي اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا لا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

85. “Then they said: ‘In Allah (alone) we have put our trust. ‘Our Lord! Make us not (subject) to a trial for the unjust people’.”

These truthful believers accepted Moses’ call to trust in Allah. They said that only in Allah they put their hopes and trust.

The verse says:

“Then they said: ‘In Allah (alone) we have put our trust….”

Then, they supplicated Him to relieve them from the wickedness and vices of their enemies as well as the pressure they were imposing upon them. They invocated Him not to set them to become rebellious like the oppressors nor put them under their control and influence.

The above holy verse continues saying:

"...'Our Lord! Make us not (subject) to a trial for the unjust people'."

Surah Yunus – Verse 86

وَنَجِّنَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

86. "And deliver us by your Mercy from the disbelieving people."

They supplicated that Allah (s.w.t.) might relieve them, by His Own Grace, from the grips of the infidels, i.e. Pharaonic nation who had been enslaving them, allocating hard work and imposing mean jobs upon them.

The verse says:

"And deliver us by your Mercy from the disbelieving people."

Surah Yunus – Verse 87

وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَي مُوسَي وَأَخِيهِ أَن تَبَوَّءَا لِقَوْمِكُمَا بِمِصْرَ بُيُوتاً وَاجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلاَةَ وَبَشّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

87. "And We revealed to Moses and his brother, saying: 'Provide houses for your people in Egypt, make your houses into places of worship, and keep up prayer: and give glad tidings to the believers'."

Another stage of the uprising and revolution of Moses (as), Harun (as), and the Children of Israel against the Pharaonids is portrayed here.

First, Allah says that He revealed to Moses and his brother that his nation should build houses in the land of Egypt. Particularly, they were to build these houses next to one another and facing them.

The verse says:

"And We revealed to Moses and his brother, saying: 'Provide houses for your people in Egypt, make your houses into places of worship..."

Then, they were to pay proper attention to spiritual self-actualization through regular prayers, thus purifying and strengthening themselves.

The verse says:

"...and keep up prayer:..."

In order to remove the effects of fear and terror from their hearts, and thus regain their spiritual and revolutionary power, He orders them to give these tidings to the faithful, as to their eventual victory, and the bestowal of Allah's favour and grace upon them.

The verse continues saying:

"...and give glad tidings to the believers'."

Surah Yunus – Verse 88

وَقَالَ مُوسَي رَبَّنَآ إِنَّكَ ءَاتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلأَهُ زِينَةً وَأَمْوَالاً فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا رَبَّنَا لِيُضِلُّوا عَن سَبِيلِكَ رَبَّنَا اطْمِسْ عَلَي
أَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاشْدُدْ عَلَي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَلا يُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّي يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ الاَلِيمَ

88. "And Moses said: 'Our Lord! Verily You have given to Pharaoh and his chiefs adornment and wealth in the life of this world, Our Lord! so that they mislead (men) from Your Path. Our Lord! Destroy their wealth, and harden their hearts, so they will not believe until they see the painful penalty'."

The Qur'an then refers to one of the reasons for the rebellion of the Pharaoh and his adherents, by mentioning the statement of Moses to his Lord where he talks about the wealth and luxury that Pharaoh and his followers had in the world. This wealth and luxury had the effect of seducing the people away from the true Path.

The verse says:

"And Moses said: 'Our Lord! Verily You have given to Pharaoh and his chiefs adornment and wealth in the life of this world, Our Lord! so that they mislead (men) from Your Path..."

Thus Moses (as) asked Allah to destroy their belongings so that they could not benefit from them, and to take their power away from them that they might be able to reflect and meditate upon the reality of existence.

The verse says:

"...Our Lord! Destroy their wealth, and harden their hearts..."

By losing these two capitals, they would quickly degenerate and move a step closer to annihilation, thus making it more possible for the Children of Israel to inflict the last blow upon them. This prayer was not because of revenge or retaliation but it was because they did not have the slightest preparedness for accepting faith.

The verse says:

“...so they will not believe until they see the painful penalty’.”

Surah Yunus – Verse 89

قَالَ قَدْ أُجِيبَتْ دَعْوَتُكُمَا فَاسْتَقِيمَا وَلاَ تَتَّبِعَآنِّ سَبِيلَ الَّذِينَ لا يَعْلَمُونَ

89. “He (Allah) said: ‘The prayer of you both has been accepted, so stand straight and follow not the path of those who know not’.”

Allah said to Moses and his brother that now that they were ready to educate and shape the people of Israel, their prayers regarding their enemies were accepted.

The verse says:

“He (Allah) said: ‘The prayer of you both has been accepted...”

Then they should finally stand, resist, be decisive and do not be afraid of the difficulties on the way. Never should they submit to the suggestions of the unwise and the ignorant and nor follow the way of those who do not know.

The verse continues saying:

“...so stand straight and follow not the path of those who know not’.”

Surah Yunus – Verse 90

وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتْبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ بَغْياً وَعَدْواً حَتَّي إِذَآ أَدْرَكَهُ الْغَرَقُ قَالَ ءَامَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لآ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ الَّذِي ءَامَنَتْ بِهِ بَنُوا إِسْرَآئِيلَ وَأَنَاْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

90. “And We made the Children of Israel to pass through the sea; then Pharaoh and his hosts chased them in insolence and hostility, until when the drowning overtook him, he said: ‘I believe that there is no Allah but He in Whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of those that surrender’.”

The last phase of the struggle of the Children of Israel with the followers of Pharaoh and their destiny has been depicted in a concise yet accurate and transparent manner here.

The verse implies that Allah let the Children of Israel pass through the sea when confronted with the army of Pharaoh while were being pressured and chased by them.

The verse says:

"And We made the Children of Israel to pass through the sea;..."

Pharaoh and his army chased them there in order to oppress and eliminate them though they were soon drowned in the midst of the stormy waves of the sea.

The verse continues saying:

"...then Pharaoh and his hosts chased them in insolence and hostility, until when the drowning overtook him..."

This course went on until the abyss surrounded Pharaoh who started floating on the waves and it was then that his blindness, arrogance and unconsciousness came to an end and the innate light of monotheism started shining.

He shouted he believed in Him Whom the Children of Israel believed in, and he confessed that there is no one to be worshipped except Him and he resigned himself to Him.

The verse says:

"...he said: 'I believe that there is no Allah but He in Whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of those that surrender'."

In fact when the prophecies of Moses proved to be true one after another, and Pharaoh realized the truthfulness of the words of this great prophet over and again, on witnessing this final power, he had no excuse but to believe, maybe hoping that the Lord of the Children of Israel would save him the same way He had saved the Children of Israel from the mountainous waves.

Obviously, such a faith which is attained in the face of calamities, when one is caught in the jaws of death, is in fact a kind of "faith for emergencies", which every criminal claims when he is captured, and is of no value.

Surah Yunus – Verse 91

ءَآلآنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

91. "What! Now! (***when facing death?***) ***while hitherto you have rebelled and been of the mischief-makers?"***

It was for this reason that Allah, addressing him, informed him that he did become a believer, while before that he used to rebel, disobey and used to commit sin; lining up alongside villains and those who were corrupt on the earth.

The verse says:

"What! Now!** (**when facing death?**) **while hitherto you have rebelled and been of the mischief-makers?"

At any rate, repenting while one is dying is of no benefit. One must repent while there is still a chance of life and of being saved.

Surah Yunus – Verse 92

فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجّيكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلْفَكَ ءَايَةً وَإِنَّ كَثِيراً مِنَ النَّاسِ عَنْ ءَايَاتِنَا لَغَافِلُونَ

92. "So this day We shall save you in your body, that you may be a Sign to those after you! But verily, many among mankind are heedless of Our Signs."

Allah through the Qur'an announces that He saves Pharaoh's body from being lost in the sea today so that we can provide an instructive lesson for future generations for arrogant rulers, and for all oppressors and those enticing others into corruption as well as for the oppressed.

The verse says:

"So this day We shall save you in your body, that you may be a Sign to those after you!..."

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an indicates that many people still remain ignorant of our verses and symbols and of all those instructive lessons which have been recorded over and over again in the history of man, and despite those clues which prove Our omnipotence?

The verse continues saying:

"...But verily, many among mankind are heedless of Our Signs."

It is narrated from Imam Rida (as) in the commentary, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn and As-Safi that Pharaoh was armoured from head to toe which must have pulled him down deep under the sea drowning him but the waves drove the heavy body ashore atop a lofty rock. This itself was a divine miracle.

Section 10: Jonah's People

Surah Yunus – Verse 93

وَلَقَدْ بَوَّأْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ مُبَوَّأَ صِدْقٍ وَرَزَقْنَاهُم مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا حَتَّي جَآءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

93. "And certainly We lodged the Children of Israel a goodly lodging, and provided them with good things, so they did not differ but after the knowledge came to them, Verily your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Judgment concerning that in which they used to differ."

The ultimate victory of the Children of Israel and their eventual return to the Holy Land after their liberation from the men of Pharaoh, are explained in this verse as follows:

"And certainly We lodged the Children of Israel a goodly lodging…"

The objective meaning of the phrase /mubawwa'a sidqin/ (a goodly lodging) can be considered as alluding to the land of Egypt or the lands of Syria and Palestine.

Then the Qur'an adds that Allah provided them with the good things to eat but they did not appreciate the real value of this blessing. Contrarily, they sowed the seeds of discord and quarreled with each other, and this they did not until the knowledge was made available to them.

The verse says:

"...and provided them with good things, so they did not differ but after the knowledge came to them…"

Eventually, Allah will arbitrate among them as to what they disagreed upon on the Day of Resurrection. If they do not experience the punishment for their discord today, they will experience it in the future.

The verse continues saying:

"…Verily your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Judgment concerning that in which they used to differ."

Surah Yunus – Verse 94

فَإِن كُنْتَ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّآ أَنْزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ فَسْأَلِ الَّذِينَ يَقْرَءُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكَ لَقَدْ جَآءَكَ الْحَقُّ مِن رَبِّكَ فَلاَ تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ

94. "So if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed unto you, then ask those who read the

book (sent) before you. The Truth hath indeed come to you from your Lord, so be not of the doubters."

How is it that the Qur'an implies: O! Prophet, if you have any doubts about the Qur'an, ask the People of the Book, despite the fact that he (S) had never had any shadow of a doubt in this respect? Reason does not admit that a prophet might doubt the revelation sent to him.

However, its meaning can be gathered in the same Surah, verse 104. Here Allah, the Exalted, has addressed the Prophet (S) while this meaning addresses the whole people. The implication of it is that if the people are hesitating, they must ask those who have read the Qur'an.

To support this argument, there is a verse at the end of the current Surah in which Allah, the Gracious, addressing the people from the tongue of the Prophet (S), says:

"O you people if you are in doubt as to my religion."

With this verse, Allah, the Gracious, made it transparent that the Prophet (S) had not been skeptical and His objective in addressing the Prophet (S) is really intended for other people.

Likewise, there are other verses that apparently address the Prophet (S) although, in reality, the addressees are people other than the Prophet (S) as well.

The verse says:

"So if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed unto you, then ask those who read the book (sent) before you..."

Incidentally, some of the great commentators of the Qur'an have stated that this doubt is of the type which is based upon supposition and probability and not upon certainty and through defining rules, like the verse which says:

"If the Beneficent (Allah) had a son..."[1].

Although the verse, ***"He begets not, nor is He begotten...",*** categorically rules out the issue of Allah having a child. This proposition is in fact a conditional proposition.

That is, were you to have the slightest doubt in this respect, you should ask those knowledgeable People of the Book, because they are sure that you tell the Truth.

Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated who said that Hadrat Muhammad (S) never doubted and never asked the People of the Book.

And finally, besides the explanation offered in the above, the verse demonstrates the fact that the reasons for the appointment of the Prophet (S) and whatever is revealed to him are not confined to his

call to prophecy and his offering of miracles.

There are allusions made to him in the Books of the preceding prophets and though those books are misrepresented and their authenticity questionable, there are numerous tidings here and there, amounting to sixty cases which are available to the People of the Book.

The holy sentence which says: ***"…The Truth has indeed come to you from your Lord…"*** signifies: by means of the revelations and exhaustive proofs it has been proved to you that what has been passed to you is an authentic and genuine truth which leaves no room for any sort of skepticism.

Thus, be firm in your beliefs in which case you should have no doubts, not refuting and denying the Divine verses, and continue your course. The verse continues saying:

"…The Truth hath indeed come to you from your Lord, so be not of the doubters."

Surah Yunus – Verse 95

وَلاَ تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

95. "Nor be of those who belied the Signs of Allah, (for) then you shall be of the losers."

The previous holy verse advised against maintaining any skepticism about the Qur'an. This noble verse addresses itself to refutation of the verses.

Many a time if skepticism remains unchallenged, it will lead to refutation. The verse says:

"Nor be of those who belied the Signs of Allah, (for) then you shall be of the losers."

All investigation and analysis that had been applied to skepticism in the previous verse, may equally propound here as well, for refutation is worse than skepticism. There have been numerous verses and traditions which inform of the certainty the Prophet (S) possessed.

Therefore, the target and the addressees of such warnings are mankind, and not the Prophet (S) in person. How can someone, who has led others to believe in something with certainty, be himself a skeptic, or refute that same thing?

Surah Yunus – Verses 96 - 97

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ

وَلَوْ جَآءَتْهُم كُلُّ ءَايَةٍ حَتَّي يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ الاَلِيمَ

96. "Verily those against whom the Word of your Lord has proved true will not believe,"
97. "Even if every Sign come unto them, until they see the painful chastisement."

Allah tells the Prophet (S), here, that there is a group among his opponents who are fanatic and obstinate and who cannot be expected to become believers.

They have become so brainwashed in their thinking, and have been led astray to such an extent that they have lost their human consciences, becoming individuals who may not be impressed or influenced.

However, explaining the subject with this connotation, the Qur'an says that Allah's commandment had been proven and was unequivocal to them, though they will not become believers.

The verse says:

"Verily those against whom the Word of your Lord has proved true will not believe,"

Even if all Allah's verses and symbols had dawned upon them, they would not become believers unless they witnessed the Divine Punishment with their own eyes, at which time, their faith would be of no avail.

The verse says:

"Even if every Sign come unto them, until they see the painful chastisement."

Surah Yunus – Verse 98

فَلَوْلاَ كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ ءَامَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهآ إِيمَانُهَآ إِلاَّ قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَّآ ءَامَنُوا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَي حِينٍ

98. "Why was there not a township which believed, so that their belief should have profited them, except the people of Jonah (Yunus)? When they believed, We removed from them the Penalty of Ignominy in the life of the world, and gave them enjoyment for a while."

Allah, the Gracious, had said in the previous verses, Pharaoh's repentance when he witnessed the Punishment was not accepted.

In line with this account, the Qur'an recounts the story of the nation of Jonah before the Punishment was imposed, asking the question why is it that the people of every settlement do not become believers when their faith would bring them dividends and is to their advantage?

Allah, the Gracious, likewise has declared that accepting faith at the time when the punishment is

imposed and death is near is of no avail. However, when the nation of Jonah witnessed the early signs of the Punishment they started to believe, and Allah relieved them from it, and allowed them to enjoy their lives until the end of their lifetimes, and reap the fruits of His blessings.

The verse says:

"Why was there not a township which believed, so that their belief should have profited them, except the people of Jonah (Yunus)? When they believed, We removed from them the Penalty of Ignominy in the life of the world, and gave them enjoyment for a while."

According to Hadrat Sadiq (as), Hadrat Jonah (as) had been preaching for 33 years, starting at the age of 30 until the age of 63. However, he only was successful in converting two people to the religion of monotheism. He then cursed the people for their recalcitrance.

One of these two believers was a sage and philosopher. When he noticed the prophet's cursing the people and his departure, he went up to them and warned them in a loud voice.

The people who were impressed, under his guidance, left the town distancing themselves from their children, and they cried and repented before Allah until they were forgiven. On his return, Jonah (as) had noticed that township had not been annihilated. He asked the reason and was told the story.[2]

Therefore, faith and repentance in sufficient time removes Divine Punishment, while prayer and supplication both removes the Punishment and generates success and happiness. (Regarding the occasion of revelation)

Surah Yunus – Verse 99

وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لأَمَنَ مَنْ فِي الأَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ جَميعاً أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّي يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

99. "And if your Lord had willed, whoever is on the earth would have believed, all of them, all together. Will thou then compel the people till they become believers?"

Man is free and faith is based upon one's voluntary choice; it is not to be accepted under compulsion or by imposition.

Allah is Omnipotent and Omniscient, employing His power in such a way that it does not run contrary to His Knowledge. And as His omniscience requires mankind to be free, He never compels them to accept faith by force.

The Prophet (S) has compassionately insisted that people accept the faith on the basis of voluntary acceptance and not through compulsion.

The verse says:

"And if your Lord had willed, whoever is on the earth would have believed, all of them, all together. Will thou then compel the people till they become believers?"

Surah Yunus – Verse 100

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَن تُؤْمِنَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَيَجْعَلُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

100. "And it is not for a soul to believe except by the Will of Allah, and He appoints uncleanness (***of infidelity***) ***on those who do not ponder."***

People are neither compelled to accept the faith (according to the previous verse) nor can they succeed in accepting the faith without His guidance and Divine Providence.

The verse says:

"And it is not for a soul to believe except by the Will of Allah…"

Divine favor and Divine Providence shine their light upon the sage and those people who use their reasoning and he who does not meditate and reason under his own volition, will suffer His Punishment and will abide in wretchedness.

The verse continues saying:

"…and He appoints uncleanness (***of infidelity***) ***on those who do not ponder."***

Sound reasoning provides the basis for faith and having no faith exhibits ignorant and irrational behavior.

Surah Yunus – Verse 101

قُلِ انْظُرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا تُغْنِي الْآيَاتُ وَالنُّذُرُ عَن قَوْمٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ

101. "Say: 'Observe you what is in the heavens and the earth! But neither Signs nor warnings avail a people who do not believe'."

In the previous verses the issue in question was that faith is a voluntary matter; it is not a matter that springs up in emergency situations, nor is it compulsory. It is for this reason that the means of acquiring faith is shown in this verse.

Addressing the Prophet (S), the Qur'an implies that he should say to the unbelievers to carefully observe

the wonderful, profound system at work in the skies and on the earth each part of which exhibits the magnitude, power, knowledge and wisdom of Allah.

The verse says:

"Say: 'Observe you what is in the heavens and the earth!..."

The above sentence explicitly rules out the issue of fatalism and the lack of freedom of will. It indicates that accepting faith is consequential upon studying the world of existence which is a task left entirely in our hands.

The Qur'an adds, however, that despite all these verses and clues to the Truth, is it not surprising that some groups do not become believers, for those verses and clues, warnings and admonishments not only are of no benefit to those who lack preparedness for embracing the Truth, but they are not useful for those obstinate people who will not become believers either.

The verse continues saying:

"...But neither Signs nor warnings avail a people who do not believe'."

Surah Yunus – Verse 102

فَهَلْ يَنْتَظِرُونَ إِلاَّ مِثْلَ أَيَّامِ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلِهِمْ قُلْ فَانْتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُم مِنَ الْمُنتَظِرِينَ

102. "Do they then expect** (**anything**) **but the like of the days of those who passed away before them? Say: 'Wait you then, verily I also with you, will be of those who wait'."

This verse is in the form of a question with a threatening tone. It declares that obstinate and faithless people expect to see a destiny other than that of former nations which suffered the painful Divine Punishment; the doom of Pharaohs, the Nimrods, Shaddads, and their assistants and advocates.

The verse says:

"Do they then expect** (**anything**) **but the like of the days of those who passed away before them?..."

Towards the end of the verse, in order to warn them, Allah commands the Prophet (S) to tell them that now they are on such a track, and are not ready to reconsider their fate, that they should wait and look out for it as he was.

The verse continues saying:

"...Say: 'Wait you then, verily I also with you, will be of those who wait'."

They wait in order to avoid and deny Allah's call, and we wait for the evil and painful destiny which awaits them like that of the former oppressive nations of the past.

Surah Yunus – Verse 103

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كَذَلِكَ حَقّاً عَلَيْنَا نُنْجِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

103. "Then** (**when Our wrath fell**) **We deliver Our messengers and those who believe. Thus it is binding on Us** (**that**) **We deliver the believers."

Our common sense tells us and we witness the fact that the good and evil are sometimes placed in the same category indiscriminately.

The Qur'an warns us also in verse 25 of Surah Al-Anfal that we must fear the calamities which not only are inflicted upon the oppressors but also upon the faithful as well. How is it, then, that this verse states that Allah saves the faithful in time of trouble?

The verse says:

"Then** (**when Our wrath fell**) **We deliver Our messengers and those who believe..."

The answer to this verse is that if the faithful remain silent when they are among the disbelievers and the guilty, Allah's punishment will encompass all of them. However, if the believers act according to their divine duty, which is forbidding the wrong, Allah may save them in time of trouble.

The verse continues saying:

"...Thus it is binding on Us** (**that**) **We deliver the believers."

1. Surah Al-Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 81
2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, and As-Safi.

Section 11: Profit or Loss Caused by Allah - Unavoidable by Anyone

Surah Yunus – Verse 104

قُلْ يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنْ كُنتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِنْ دِيني فَلآَ أَعْبُدُ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ أَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

104. "Say: "O you people! If you are in doubt as to my religion, then (know that) I do not worship those whom you worship other than Allah! But I worship Allah Who causes you to die and I have been commanded that I should be of the believers'."

Do not allow the skepticism of others to influence you. Decisiveness is the primary condition for leadership.

Any reconciliation and agreement with the unbelievers is prohibited. You must expel the unbelieving front from among yourselves, making them despair. Beware that the enemy envies the leaders of Islam.

You must declare your ostracism and position of differentiation from the unbelievers. Allah Who is in command of life and death is more suitable to be worshipped than idols, oppressors, and insignificant powers and puppets. Therefore, the holy Prophet (S) and, by extension, the believers have been commanded to be faithful and testify to monotheism.

The verse says:

"Say: "O you people! If you are in doubt as to my religion, then (know that) I do not worship those whom you worship other than Allah! But I worship Allah Who causes you to die and I have been commanded that I should be of the believers'."

Surah Yunus – Verses 105 - 106

وَأَنْ أَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفاً وَلاَ تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

وَلا تَدْعُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لاَ يَنفَعُكَ وَلاَ يَضُرُّكَ فَإِن فَعَلْتَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذاً مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

105. "And (I have also been commanded) that 'Set your face towards the Religion uprightly, and never be of the polytheists.'"
106. "And do not call other than Allah on that which will neither profit you nor hurt you: for if you do, then verily you will on that case be of the unjust."

In the last verses of this Surah, Allah, the Supreme, has designated the responsibilities of the

Messenger (the Prophet) as to what he must do in case the people did not follow him or hesitated in accepting his mission.

The verse says:

"And (I have also been commanded) that 'Set your face towards the Religion uprightly, and never be of the polytheists.'"

The Prophet's responsibility is to get the people to desist from the worship of self-styled gods and induce the sincere worship of the one Allah, "Allah", to inculcate an honest faith in Him and to execute His Commandments whether apparent or hidden.

They should not worship other gods and man-made idols, for by doing this they would be oppressing themselves because these false deities are of no advantage or disadvantage to them. He Who is really the only source of benefit and loss is no one but "Allah".

The verse says:

"And do not call other than Allah on that which will neither profit you nor hurt you: for if you do, then verily you will on that case be of the unjust."

Man's submission to idols and those manufactured deities he has made as partners with the Creator, is injustice to himself. If he does this, he will lose his identity which is one of the most precious endowments he is blessed with, and if he tries to persuade others to follow this road this can also be considered as oppressing the people by misleading them in their thinking.

Though this speech is addressed to the Prophet, in reality it is targeted at the people.

Surah Yunus – Verse 107

وَإِن يَمْسَسْكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلاَ كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلاَّ هُوَ وَإِن يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلاَ رَآدَّ لِفَضْلِهِ يُصِيبُ بِهِ مَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

107. "And if Allah afflicts you with any hurt, none can remove it but Him. And if He intends any good for you, none can repel His favor. He causes it to reach whomsoever of His servants He pleases, and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

If Allah causes you pain in cases of calamities or brings you hardships or sufferings, no one but He is able to release you by removing them, and if He gives you well-being in matters of health, blessings or affluence and so forth, no one can hinder Him or block His way.

The verse says:

“And if Allah afflicts you with any hurt, none can remove it but Him. And if He intends any good for you, none can repel His favor...”

Allah’s beneficence, which is always appropriate, extends in different circumstances for whom He pleases from among His servants and according to His wise Judgment and realistic evaluation. He is forgiving of the sins committed by his servants and He is compassionate towards them.

The verse says:

“...He causes it to reach whomsoever of His servants He pleases, and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”

Surah Yunus – Verse 108

قُلْ يَآ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَكُمُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَي فإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَن ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَآ أَنَاْ عَلَيْكُم بِوَكِيلٍ

108. “Say: ‘O mankind! (Now) the Truth has come to you from your Lord. Therefore, whoever is guided, he is guided for (the good of) his own self, and whoever strays, he strays only against it; and I am not a warden over you’.”

This verse and the one following it are admonishments to mankind in general and to the Prophet (S) in particular. They complement the commandments that Allah has explained throughout this Surah and with that, the Surah of Yunus comes to an end.

At first, as a general instruction, Allah commands the Prophet (S) to say to mankind that the Truth has now reached them from their Lord.

These instructions, this Heavenly Book, this program and this Prophet along with his miracles are all true and the evidence of their truthfulness is explicit and obvious.

The verse declares:

“Say: ‘O mankind! (Now) the Truth has come to you from your Lord...”

In the light of this reality, he who is led by the light of this truth has been guided and will reap his own advantages while he who refuses and fails to submit himself when facing truth would have taken steps towards his own destruction.

The verse continues saying:

“...Therefore, whoever is guided, he is guided for (the good of) his own self, and whoever strays

he strays only against it;…"

The Prophet (S) is instructed to say that he is not their agent; he does not act on their behalf as an advocate, nor is he their guardian.

The verse says:

"…and I am not a warden over you'."

That is, neither is he commissioned to force them to accept the truth for accepting faith under compulsion is meaningless not could he save them from the Divine Punishment in case they did not accept the Truth.

His duty is to call them to Islam, to bring Allah's message to them, to guide them on the Straight Path, to lead them, and to serve them as their leader.

Surah Yunus – Verse 109

وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَي إِلَيْكَ وَاصْبِرْ حَتَّي يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ

109. "And follow (*only*) ***what is revealed unto you, and be patient till Allah judges, and He is the best of the judges."***

In this noble verse, Allah sums up the duties of the Prophet (S) in two sentences: the first one says that he should act according to what has been revealed unto him.

The verse says:

"And follow (*only*) ***what is revealed unto you…"***

The direction or his path has been fixed by what Allah has revealed to him and he is not allowed to make the slightest deviation from it.

Secondly there are numerous trials and tribulations facing him on this path and he must not let himself be distracted by these difficulties.

He must wait, practice fortitude, and maintain his position until Allah issues His verdict concerning his success over his enemies, for Allah is the Best of those who decide because His decision is identical with the Truth, His wisdom is based on justice and His promise is never to be broken. The verse continues saying:

"…and be patient till Allah judges, and He is the best of the judges."

The End of Surah Yunus.

Surah Hud, Chapter 11

Surah Hud (Hud)
No. 11 (Revealed in Mecca)
123 verses in 10 sections

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The Contents of Surah Hud

This holy Surah was revealed during the last years of the Prophet's stay in Mecca, during which the Muslims were experiencing very hard times because of the passing away of Hadrat Abu-Talib and Hadrat Khadijah.

The blessed Prophet (S) once said: "*Surah Hud made me age*", for the verse recommending perseverance and persistence has been revealed within this Surah. It says:

"*Persevere and persist as you have been ordered and your followers with you.* "

However, the impatience and lack of perseverance of the companions of the Prophet (S) annoyed him.

The contents of this Surah, which comprises 123 verses, deal with the history of the prophets; in particular, the story of Hadrat Noah (as). It also focuses upon economic problems.

Attention is devoted to the history of the prophets, presenting their message as a continuous historical process, and not as some isolated affairs. It insists on the fact that the history of the prophets is governed by laws, the study of which reveals the secrets of the rise and fall, the glorification and degradation of nations.

This indicates that religion is not separate from society, and society's destiny depends entirely upon people's religion and way of life.

The name of Hadrat Hud (as) has been repeated five times in this Surah which equals the number of its recurrence throughout the rest of the Qur'an.

As for the virtues implied in this Surah, there is a tradition narrated from the Prophet (S) who has said:

"He who recites this Surah, will reap rewards, the size of which would equal the number of all those who believed in Hud and the other prophets as well as those who refuted them, and he will be elevated in rank equal to those of the martyrs on the Day of Resurrection, and thus everything would be easy for him."

Obviously, a mere cursory reading of the Surah would have not such a result; rather reading, meditating upon it and later combining it with practice, would place man along with the former believers and distance him from the rejecters of the prophets.

Section 1: Repentance Earns Pardon and the Bounties from Allah

Surah Hud – Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الر كِتَابٌ أُحْكِمَتْ ءَايَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِن لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "'Alif 'A', Lam 'L', Ra 'R'. (This is) a Book whose verses are set firmly, then explained in detail, from One All-Wise, All-Aware."

The Qur'an is made up of those very same alphabetical letters that are found in every Arabic text available for all. However, Allah has created a book out of these simple letters, the equivalent of which no one can produce.

Just as man makes bricks and ceramics out of soil, Allah creates thousands of flowers and plants, fruits and animals as well as man, out of the same materials. Of course just as we can notice Allah's omnipotence in the system of creation, we can observe His omnipotence in the Book of Divine legislation as well.

There are some further explanations about the abbreviated letters mentioned at the beginning of Surah

Al-Baqarah, No. 2 which need not to be repeated here.

The Qur'an is a decisive Book, containing one fundamental spirit; that is, the spirit of monotheism; besides all its stories, exhortations, Divine commandments, and its verses are the explanations of this very line.

The Qur'an is a decisive book which has not been distorted nor is it to be doubted.

It is not based on conjecture and presupposition, and so all its contents are irrevocable with sound foundations.

The foundations of the Qur'an are decisively firm and nothing will be able to penetrate or cause disruption in it. The further science advances, the more the secrets of this book are revealed and discovered.

The Qur'an is both demonstrative and irrevocable, while at the same time, encompassing all the dimensions of this worldly life and the life hereafter. The Qur'an has been revealed to the Prophet (S) in its totality, after which, it has been extensively explained. And as Allah is Wise, His Book is decisive, and as He is All-Aware, He has dealt with the details of all needs.

The verse says:

"'Alif 'A', Lam 'L', Ra 'R'. (***This is***) ***a Book whose verses are set firmly, then explained in detail, from One All-Wise, All-Aware."***

Surah Hud – Verse 2

أَلاَّ تَعْبُدُوا إِلاَّ اللَّهَ إِنَّنِي لَكُم مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ

2. "(It teaches) that you should worship none but Allah. Verily, I am for you from Him, a warner and a bearer of glad tidings."

This verse takes up the most important and the most fundamental issue of the Qur'an, which is monotheism by explaining the campaign against polytheism as follows:

Allah's first and foremost call to mankind is that he should stop worshipping everything else but the Almighty.

The verse says:

"(It teaches) that you should worship none but Allah..."

Secondly, the Divine call concerns the matter that the Prophet (S) is surely acting on Allah's behalf, as a

messenger of warning and glad tidings.

The duty of the Prophet (S) is that he warns people against disobeying Allah, injustice, corruption, polytheism and infidelity.

He informs them of Divine punishment as a result of their evil actions, and give them glad tidings of a happy fate for their obedience, piety and virtuousness.

The holy verse continued saying:

"...Verily, I am for you from Him, a warner and a bearer of glad tidings."

Surah Hud – Verse 3

وَأَنِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُمَتِّعْكُم مَتَاعاً حَسَناً إِلَي أَجَلٍ مُسَمّيً وَيُؤْتِ كُلَّ ذِي فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهُ وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ كَبِيرٍ

3. "And that you seek the forgiveness of Allah and turn unto Him in repentance so that He may provide you with a goodly provision to an appointed term, and bestow His abounding grace on everyone endowed with grace. But if you turn away (from serving Him), then I fear for you the Penalty of a Great Day."

His third call is that people should repent from their sins, and purify themselves from all types of pollution.

His fourth call for them is that they should turn to Him after purifying themselves from their sins by repentance, thus decorating themselves with Divine characteristics. This means that returning to Him means nothing more than acquiring those qualities that are associated with Him.

Afterwards, the holy Qur'an recounts that the practical results which ensue from acceptance or rejection of the four commandments, mentioned in the above, are as follows: Whenever you act according to this schedule, Allah grants you a whole happy life-time of enjoyment in your worldly life.

The verse says:

"And that you seek the forgiveness of Allah and turn unto Him in repentance so that He may provide you with a goodly provision to an appointed term..."

Therefore, before enabling one to reap the fruits of his deeds in the After-Life, religion and religious ideologies tend to produce their fruits in this world.

Moreover, the fact that everyone is rewarded according to his deeds in this world, and people's

individual differences are never overlooked, it is amazing how they can all act in accordance with those four principles mentioned above.

Allah measures each in his virtue and every individual's merit for whatever He bestows upon him.

The verse continues saying:

"...and bestow His abounding grace on everyone endowed with grace..."

However, if you turn against these principles, disobeying these ideological and practical commandments, I fear for you the punishment of a Great Day, when you must stand in that great court of Justice for the Divine Judgment.

The verse says:

"...But if you turn away (from serving Him), then I fear for you the Penalty of a Great Day."

Surah Hud – Verse 4

إِلَي اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ وَهُوَ عَلَي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

4. "To Allah is your return and He is All-Powerful over everything."

At any rate, one should beware that regardless of who he is and whatever rank or position he may occupy, that ultimately, the one will return to Him.

The verse says:

"To Allah is your return..."

The above sentence points to the fifth principle of the fundamental principles of the Qur'an, that is, the Resurrection.

You should never think that your power is significant compared to the power of Allah, or you are able to disobey His orders, and escape His Court of Justice. Never give yourselves the benefit of a doubt that He would be unable to assemble your degenerated bones after death, providing them with a new life, because He is Omnipotent and has the power over all things.

The verse continues saying:

"...and He is All-Powerful over everything."

Surah Hud – Verse 5

أَلآ إِنَّهُمْ يَثْنُونَ صُدُورَهُمْ لِيَسْتَخْفُوا مِنْهُ أَلا حِينَ يَستَغْشُونَ ثِيَابَهُمْ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

5. "Behold! They fold up their breasts to hide them from him (the Prophet)! Behold! Even when they cover themselves with their garments, He knows what they conceal and what they reveal: Verily He is aware of what is in the hearts."

This verse, in general, makes allusions to one of the foolish behaviors of the Prophet's (S) enemies who, by using their subterfuge and hypocritical manner, i.e., distancing themselves from the Truth, sought to conceal their true nature from the public so as not to lend their ears to the words of truth.

Thus, the holy Qur'an implies that the unbelievers would approach each other in a very intimate manner, and draw alongside one another so as to conceal themselves and their words from the Prophet (S).

The verse says:

"Behold! They fold up their breasts to hide them from him (the Prophet)!..."

The interpretation of /yanun/ probably refers to whatever act of concealment, whether apparent or hidden, that was performed by the enemies of the Prophet (S).

1- The Arabic verb /yanun/ means placing two things next to each other. The word /'inan/ means 'two', which also signifies bearing a grudge against someone. Therefore, the Qur'anic phrase: (yanuna sudurahum/ either means that the unbelievers converge and ally themselves for secret objectives and conspiracies against the prophets or that they bear grudges against them.

Therefore, the holy Qur'an hastens to add that we should beware of those who conceal themselves in their places, however they are not hidden from Allah as He has knowledge of all secrets whether open or hidden.

The verse also says:

"...Behold! Even when they cover themselves with their garments, He knows what they conceal and what they reveal: Verily He is aware of what is in the hearts."

Surah Hud – Verse 6

وَمَا مِن دَآبَّةٍ فِي الأَرْضِ إِلاَّ عَلَي اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا كُلٌّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

6. “And there is no moving creature on the earth but its sustenance is on Allah, and He knows its resting place and its depository. All is (recorded) in a clear Book.”

The Arabic word /dabbah/, derived from the word /dabib/ signifies ‘walking slowly’ and ‘taking short steps.’ However it also refers to every moving creature.

The Qur’anic word /rizq/ signifies the continuous bestowal of bounties, whether material or spiritual. Hence, we call to Allah in our prayers:

“*O Allah! Bestow upon me knowledge that is useful.*”

Whatever of sustenance He bestows is suitable for the relevant creature. For instance, the food that babies utilize, while still unborn, alters according to their needs after birth which changes into delicious milk, otherwise, how could a human being feed a baby in the womb of its mother? Or, how could a newly born baby receive its food?

In another occurrence, the Qur’an says:

“And how many a living creature that does not carry it’s sustenance: Allah sustains it and yourselves.”1

Hadrat Ali (as) says in his will to Imam Hasan (as):

“Sustenance, /rizq/, is of two kinds: One kind is to be obtained through your own endeavor and struggle; the other kind is that which comes to you by itself, whether it be natural, such as sunlight and rain, or whether it be a potentiality in man such as intelligence and memory.”

Thus, the verse does not tell us to sit around and wait for food to descend from Heaven; rather it tells us to struggle and to endeavor, as well as to consider whatever we obtain as Allah-given and is a bestowal from Him.

He takes care of all creatures which necessitates the existence of a very accurate system to be permanently at work so as to keep track of all allotted portions and needs. That is, He must be aware of the numbers and places of all men, animals, marine animals, birds, and desert animals as well as creatures great or small with their various specifications and needs.

The verse says:

“And there is no moving creature on the earth but its sustenance is on Allah, and He knows its resting place and its depository. All is (recorded) in a clear Book.”

If all knowledge is contained in the Holy Book, it follows that he who has a good command of the Book knows everything. We recite in the last verse of Surah Ar-Ra‘d:

"...Say: 'Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you and the one with whom is the knowledge of the Book."[2]

Both Shi'ah and the Sunni quotations reaffirm the fact that the man in question in the foregoing sentence is Hadrat Ali (as).

Concerning the provision bestowed upon the creatures, Allah's way of treatment is of two kinds. One is providing them directly with those necessities for their existence and the other is providing for them through making the means and devices available which would enable them to meet their needs.

Thus, obtaining one's share is not incompatible with the laws governing one's endeavor in obtaining what he needs.

In other words, one must not rely upon others for his needs, abandoning his own struggle. At the same time we must admit that our share is in Allah's control, for He has made available to us both the resources of our provisions as well as the reasons and means for the exploitation, discovery, and acquisition of those resources.

Surah Hud – Verse 7

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَآءِ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلاً وَلَئِن قُلْتَ إِنَّكُم مَبْعُوثُونَ مِن بَعْدِ الْمَوْتِ لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَآ إِلا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ

7. "And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth within Six Days (periods), and His Throne was over the water so that He might try you, which of you is best in conduct. And, if you were to say to them: 'Verily you shall be raised up after death', the unbelievers would surely say: 'This is (not) but a manifest sorcery'."

There are three principal issues discussed in this noble verse: First, the creation of the world of existence which represents a display of Allah's Omnipotence, specially the initiation of creation which signifies His Power, as well as the reasons for His glory.

The verse says:

"And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth within Six Days (periods)..."

The word 'Days' here means epochs, whether long or short.

Then it adds:

"...and His Throne was over the Water..."

Some of the scientists believe that at very early time of creation, the world of existence was in the form of some molten materials, (or some extra ordinary pressed gases which had the form of some liquid materials).

Then, some great bursts happened inside this very liquid substance and parts of its outside surface were continuously separated off which, finally, formed the stars and germs of the systems in the sky.

Therefore, the world of existence, maybe, at first was located on this great material, the liquid like.

The second issue hinted at in this verse, is the objective of the creation of the cosmos, the main aim of which refers to the supreme fruit of the process of creation, namely man. Man who must be subjected to educational processes, thus evolving and approaching the Almighty even further.

It says:

"...so that He might try you which of you is best in conduct..."

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Good conduct refers to that kind of conduct which is coupled with knowledge, sincerity and virtue, not a mere action which is practiced in abundance. Therefore, the heavens and the earth have been created for good deeds and not for the sake of happiness, pleasure-seeking, and negligence."

Definitely, those who deny the Day of Resurrection have no reasoning for their claim and they only take recourse to accusations of sorcery and hallucinations.

The verse says:

"...And, if you were to say to them: 'Verily you shall be raised up after death', the unbelievers would surely say: 'This is (not) but a manifest sorcery'."

Surah Hud – Verse 8

وَلَئِنْ أَخَّرْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ إِلَي أُمَّةٍ مَعْدُودَةٍ لَيَقُولُنَّ مَا يَحْبِسُهُ أَلاَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمْ لَيْسَ مَصْرُوفاً عَنْهُمْ وَحَاقَ بِهِم مَاكَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ

8. "And if We postpone the penalty from them until a limited period of time, they will surely say: 'What prevents it?' Beware! On the day it will come to them it shall not be turned aside from them, and they will be encompassed by that which they used to mock at."

The word /'ummah/ refers to a group which has a common aim and also means women. The aim in this verse is a definite period of time as we also recite in Surah Yusuf /wa⍰kur ba'da 'ummatin/ which means

that the freed prisoner was reminded of Yusuf after the passage of a length of time.

At any rate, Allah, the Gracious, remarks that if He postponed the tormenting punishment of these unbelievers for a certain period of time, delaying its certain arrival, they would sarcastically cry: If these punishments are certain to come, what has kept them back?

In response, the Qur'an implies that they should beware of the punishment whose late arrival they mocked about, for when He decides to let it come, no one would be able to reverse it, and when He wishes it to happen, no one can stop it, and they would be eradicated by the very punishment which they so mockingly despised.

The verse says:

"And if We postpone the penalty from them until a limited period of time, they will surely say: 'What prevents it?' Beware! On the day it will come to them it shall not be turned aside from them, and they will be encompassed by that which they used to mock at."

Explanations

1- The postponement of the Divine punishment has a number of implications, namely, providing a chance for the sinners to repent, the birth of faithful children from deviant parents, etc. Moreover, the existence of honest people and their prayers also delay the occurrence of Divine punishment.

2- Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as) have been quoted in a tradition as saying that the holy phrase: /'ummatin ma'dudah/ in the verse refers to a limited group of like minded people, alludes to the friends of Hadrat Mahdi (as), whose number equals no more than 313, equivalent in size to the circle of Companions at Badr, who assembled like autumn clouds over the sea.

3- Other interpretations have been made for the phrase /'ummatin ma'dudah/ with documentations from the Qur'anic verses and the sayings of the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) which also exist in Sunni interpretations and we will not deal with them here for the sake of brevity.

1. Surah 'Ankabut, No. 29, verse 60
2. Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 43

Section 2: Patience and Good Deeds Earn

Pardon from Allah

Surah Hud – Verse 9

وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنَا الإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً ثُمَّ نَزَعْنَاهَا مِنْهُ إِنَّهُ لَيَئُوسٌ كَفُورٌ

9. “If We make man taste mercy from Ourselves, (***and***) ***then take it off from him, verily he is despairing ungrateful.”***

Allah’s blessings do not always reflect His compassion; nor does usually the withdrawal of His blessings signify His punishment and anger. Many a time, they could mean that He might be putting someone through a special test.

The verse says:

“If We make man taste mercy from Ourselves, (***and***) ***then take it off from him, verily he is despairing ungrateful.”***

As man does not understand the Divine wisdom and his own good, he tends to jump to conclusions, feels desperate and becomes ungrateful.

However faith in Him is not based upon what we perceive to be our happiness in life. Allah’s blessings are the consequences of His judgment and His grace, not the results of our merit. Therefore, despair of Allah’s blessings leads to ungratefulness.

In this regard, the verse says:

“…verily he is despairing ungrateful.”

Surah Hud – Verse 10

وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنَاهُ نَعْمَآءَ بَعْدَ ضَرَّآءَ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ ذَهَبَ السَّيِّئَاتُ عَنّي إِنَّهُ لَفَرِحٌ فَخُورٌ

10. “And if We make him taste (***Our***) ***favors after adversity has afflicted him, he will say, ‘The evils have departed from me’. Verily he is joyous, boastful.”***

All the blessings which are handed down to man after hardships and sufferings must serve as a source of thanksgiving and remembering Allah (s.w.t.) and not as a means of arrogance, boasting and self satisfaction.

There are two risks to one's joy, one is making a wrong analysis of events, and the other is that this joy would result in a person's arrogance.

Worldly affairs do not always take the same path, on the contrary, as some Islamic traditions testify to, they have two sides to them; sometimes they run in your favor, at other times, they run against you.

Once they are in your favor, you must not become arrogant, and once they are otherwise, you must keep your patience because, at any rate, you are the focus of the Divine attention, and you are in the course of Allah's trial.

The verse says:

"And if We make him taste** (**Our**) **favors after adversity has afflicted him, he will say, 'The evils have departed from me'. Verily he is joyous, boastful."

Surah Hud – Verse 11

إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُوْلَئِكَ لَهُم مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ

11. "Except those who are patient and constant, and do deeds of righteousness; for them is forgiveness and a great reward."

All cases dealt with in the Qur'an concerning good conduct are mentioned along with faith except in this verse which, says:

"Except those who are patient and constant".

In this verse, too, 'the patient' refers to the true believers compared with those who behave with intolerance.

Patience is not confined only to cases of frustration and bitter events. On the contrary, in cases of abundant welfare and happiness, one must keep patience, otherwise, it will lead man to unruliness as the Children of Israel were when they were liberated from the yoke of Pharaoh and gained a more comfortable life and independence they went the path of aberration.

They then started worshipping cows and when confronted by the protests of Harun, they went so far in their rudeness that they were about to kill their prophet.

The Qur'an in this regard says:

"Verily the people judged me weak and had well nigh slain me."[1]

Therefore, being patient in times of joy and sorrow is one of the best examples of good conduct. A true

believer is an integrated person who never despairs, neither is he blasphemous, happy-go lucky, nor arrogant. On the contrary, he is patient and persevering.

Surah Hud – Verse 12

فَلَعَلَّكَ تَارِكٌ بَعْضَ مَا يُوحَي إِلَيْكَ وَضَآئِقٌ بِهِ صَدْرُكَ أَن يَقُولُوا لَوْلاَ أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ جَآءَ مَعَهُ مَلَكٌ إِنَّمَآ أَنتَ نَذِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ عَلَي كُلّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

12. "So perhaps you may (be inclined) to give up a part of what is revealed unto thee, and your breast becomes straitened by it lest they say, 'Why has not a treasure been sent down unto him or an angel not come with him?' Verily you are only a warner, and Allah is custodian over everything."

Once the unbelievers asked the Prophet (S) to turn the mountains of Mecca into gold through a miracle or they wished that an angel come to him, thus confirming him. Others, on the contrary, owing to their grudge and hatred, wanted him to say something related to Hadrat Ali (as) and whenever he would say something, they would reject all of it.

Therefore, the Prophet (S) felt a strain in his heart, and consequently, he delayed conveying the messages. Incidentally, his delay did not intrude upon his infallibility nor was it incompatible with it, for at that time, there was no urgency to convey Allah's message.

Thus, owing to considerations which were not personal but based upon expediency, he could postpone conveying the verses. With the revelation of this verse, those considerations were set aside and the message had now to be conveyed without delay.

The verse says:

"So perhaps you may (be inclined) to give up a part of what is revealed unto thee, and your breast becomes straitened by it lest they say, 'Why has not a treasure been sent down unto him or an angel not come with him?'..."

Perhaps, the delay in conveying the revelations had been confined solely to a few obstinate people, of whose guidance the Prophet (S) had despaired. However, Allah ordered that although they might not become believers, it was the duty of the Prophet (S) not to abandon them.

The verse continues saying:

"...Verily you are only a warner, and Allah is custodian over everything."

Therefore, a leader and an authority in propagating the message of Islam must be always decisive in

propagating and conveying the word of Allah, remaining undaunted by the people's words and pretexts, for Allah is the guarantor of a prophet's duty and prophets are not responsible for the consequences. They must act according to their duty and leave the rest to the Almighty.

The unbelievers used to put pressure upon the Prophet (S) under various pretexts. It was in addition to the physical tortures that they used to inflict upon him.

Surah Hud – Verse 13

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوَرٍ مِثْلِهِ مُفْتَرَيَاتٍ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُم مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

13. "Or do they say: 'He has forged it'? Say, 'Bring you then ten suras forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever you can, other than Allah, if you are truthful!'"

The Qur'an is not only a miracle of eloquence in itself, it is also a miracle from the view point of its wisdom and ideology, its admonitions, its reasoning, the news it gives of the invisible world and its legislations.

The sentence, ***"and call to your aid whomsoever you can"*** is a call addressed to everyone, and not only to those Arabs who could comprehend the eloquence and the fluency of the noble Qur'an.

In this regard He elsewhere reiterates:

"Were men and jinn to combine together to bring the like of this Qur'an, they could not bring the like of it…"2

The miraculous nature of the Qur'an is multi-faceted. It is found in the sweetness of its words when read, the harmony of its content, etc. Although it had been revealed over a period of 23 years, it had revealed scientific knowledge which had been non-existent at that time.

It foretold affairs that eventually took place in the future. It provided information concerning the nations of antiquity which had left no trace from themselves. It stated comprehensive laws governing all dimensions of the individual and social life of man. And it has remained intact throughout the ages free of all distortions, changes, and of becoming out-dated and forgotten.

Despite making it easy for them and all these challenges, mankind is still rendered impotent.

The Qur'an elsewhere says:

"…to bring the like of this Qur'an…".3

In the verse under discussion, it says:

"Bring you then ten suras forged like unto it".

In another place it makes it even easier by saying:

"…then bring one Surah the like thereof…". 4

In addition to this, the Qur'an issues thought-provoking challenges.

Elsewhere it says:

"Were men and jinn to combine together to bring the like of this Qur'an."5

Elsewhere it implies that if they call on all the think-tanks of the whole globe; they cannot produce anything like the Qur'an.

Here is the text:

"…they could not bring the like of it, though some of them were aiders of others."6

History has also clearly proven that enemies have waged numerous wars against Islam, they have planned conspiracies and yet they have never been able to produce even one Surah like that of the Qur'an. Can any miracle performed be better than this?

However, instead of using their reason, the unbelievers, accused the Prophet (S) of fabricating the Qur'an, saying that it is not the word of Allah, while the Qur'an is the eternal miracle of history.

The verse says:

"Or do they say: 'He has forged it'? Say, 'Bring you then ten suras forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever you can, other than Allah, if you are truthful!'"

Surah Hud – Verse 14

فإن لَّمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكُمْ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَآ أُنزِلَ بِعِلْمِ اللَّهِ وَأَن لآ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ فَهَلْ أَنتُم مُسْلِمُونَ

14. "If then they do not answer your (call), know that it is sent down by the knowledge of Allah, and that there is no Allah but He! Will you then submit (to Islam)?"

The unbelievers accused the Prophet (S) of having learned the Qur'an from someone. The Qur'an answers them that the source of this Book is Divine Knowledge and nothing other than that. Sometimes they also said that he had written the Qur'an while receiving help from others. This verse provides a firm answer to all those accusations.

It says:

"If then they do not answer your** (**call**)**, know that it is sent down by the knowledge of Allah, and that there is no Allah but He! Will you then submit** (**to Islam**)**?"

The noble Qur'an is not a product of man's conjectural suppositions, imaginations, or contemplations, it is based upon Allah's Omniscience, recognizing no spatial, temporal, or racial boundaries and is not specific to only one particular generation for it is based on Allah's Knowledge.

Similar to the infinite knowledge of Allah, the secrets of the Qur'an are infinite. Therefore, we must not waver in our opinion concerning the authenticity of the holy Qur'an and in monotheism with regards to Allah because of infidelity and hesitation of disbelievers.

Surah Hud – Verses 15 - 16

مَن كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا نُوَفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لا يُبْخَسُونَ

أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ إِلاَّ النَّارُ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوا فِيهَا وَبَاطِلٌ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

15. "Whoever desires the life of this world and its adornment, We shall pay them in full** (**the recompense for**) **their deeds therein, and they will not be defrauded therein."
16. "**(**But**) **these are they for whom there is naught in the hereafter but the Fire: and what they have wrought in it shall fail, and vain shall be what they were doing."

Their reward for their good conduct will be delivered to them without any diminution in this world and they will be amply rewarded, which is healthy and favours gifted to them, but there would be no rewards for them in the Afterlife, for they had no intention of meriting Allah's approbation in their deeds and expected no compensation in the Hereafter.

They had only intended to have what they gain in this world and this they have obtained.

The verse says:

"Whoever desires the life of this world and its adornment, We shall pay them in full** (**the recompense for**) **their deeds therein, and they will not be defrauded therein."

The foregoing holy verses present adequate proofs to the unbelievers and deniers by mentioning the reasons for the miracle of the Qur'an.

After the truth has been well-expounded and made crystal clear, some people abstain from submitting to it for their own material benefits. The Qur'an refers to the fate of such people in this verse and in the one

following by saying that those whose aims are simply to have a good and luxurious life are given their complete reward in this world without losing anything.

However, if their intention is to please Allah, they will be rewarded abundantly both in this world and in the next.

One could easily find examples of the above facts in his environment. The Western world, in its unceasing efforts, has split the unknown secrets of many sciences, thus controlling and dominating various forces in nature.

It has attained affluence as a result of its unity and its continuous struggle and resistance against difficulties. Thus, they will evidently reap the fruits of their labor and attain the fruits of victory. However, as their aim is solely confined to the worldly life, the natural consequences of such acts will be only limited to the provisions of this material world.

Therefore, in this verse the Qur'an explicitly states that whatever they have done in this world (which are rewarded here) will be obliterated in the next world and they will get no rewards for whatever they have performed for all they have done for other than Allah will become null and void.

The verse says:

"(But) these are they for whom there is naught in the hereafter but the Fire: and what they have wrought in it shall fail, and vain shall be what they were doing."

Surah Hud – Verse 17

أَفَمَن كَانَ عَلَي بَيّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبّهِ وَيَتْلُوهُ شَاهِدٌ مِنْهُ وَمِن قَبْلِهِ كِتَابُ مُوسَي إِمَاماً وَرَحْمَةً أُوْلَئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمَن يَكْفُرْبِهِ مِنَ الاَحْزَابِ فَالنَّارُ مَوْعِدُهُ فَلا تَكُ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِنْهُ إِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَبّكَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

17. "Is he then (like unto him) who has a clear proof from his Lord and follows him a witness from Him, and before it (is) the Book of Moses, a guide and a mercy (testifying it)? These believe in it; but whoever of the (different) parties disbelieves in it, the (Hell) Fire is the promised place; so be you not in doubt of it; verily it (the Qur'an) is the truth from your Lord, but most of the people do not believe."

Allah has offered more than adequate reasons as to why people must be believers. The Qur'an is a miracle on its own and, at the same time, a person like Ali-ibn-Abi-Talib (as), is also a witness which testifies to its authenticity. Moreover, the Torah had also provided good tidings as to the emergence of the Qur'an long before it was revealed.

Therefore, the Qur'an inquires whether he who brings clear evidence from his Lord, who is supported by

a testifying witness, who is commissioned by Allah, and before whom the Book of Moses (Torah) had come bringing revelations as the forerunner of future blessings to come and heralding his magnitude to be regarded as equal to those who lack all these qualities, signs, and proofs.

The verse says:

"Is he then (like unto him) who has a clear proof from his Lord and follows him a witness from Him, and before it (is) the Book of Moses, a guide and a mercy (testifying it)?..."

He is no one but the Prophet Muhammad (S) and /bayyinah/ or the clear evidence he offers, is the glorious Qur'an, and his witness, who testifies as to the truthfulness of his prophecy amongst the believers is none other than that righteous believer, Ali (as), whose signs and characteristics had been depicted in the Torah long before his historical appearance. Therefore, the authenticity of his mission has been verified in three ways:

First, the Qur'an which is a clear evidence in his hands.

Secondly, the previous holy Books which have precisely explained his signs, and whose adherents were very familiar with those signs during the era of the Prophet (S).

Thirdly, faithful followers, the leading figure of whom is Ali-ibn-Abi-Talib (as.) who testifies as to the truthfulness of his call and his words.

Can one still doubt the authenticity of his call or compare him with others who claim to be 'prophets'?

Then, it makes an allusion to truth-seeking individuals and calls on them to become believers, telling them to adhere to such a prophet who carries so many clear proofs.

It says:

"...These believe in it;..."

Following this statement, the Qur'an mentions the fate of the unbelievers saying whichever of the various groups denies him, will meet the Fire of the Inferno, as there is its meeting place.

It continues saying:

"...but whoever of the (different) parties disbelieves in it, the (Hell) Fire is the promised place;..."

As is the case with the style of the holy Qur'an in most situations, it addresses the people through addressing the Prophet (S), at the end of the verse as a general lesson it teaches that since the circumstances are as such and the authenticity of his call has been confirmed by so many witnesses, there should not be the least shadow of doubt cast as far as his mission is concerned, for this is a truthful word on the part of Allah though many people, because of their ignorance, fanaticism and ego-

centrism would remain unbelievers in his mission.

The verse says:

"...so be you not in doubt of it; verily it (the Qur'an) is the truth from your Lord, but most of the people do not believe."

In summary, the verse refers to the privileges of Islam and the Muslims, the righteous ones, and their reliance upon sound reasoning for choosing this divine school of thought, while, simultaneously, it also explains the wicked and evil destiny of the arrogant unbelievers.

Surah Hud – Verse 18

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَي عَلَي اللَّهِ كَذِباً أُوْلَئِكَ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَي رَبِّهِمْ وَيَقُولُ الاَشْهَادُ هَؤُلآءِ الَّذِين كَذَبُوا عَلَي رَبِّهِمْ أَلاَ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَي الظَّالِمِينَ

18. "And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah? (On the Day of Resurrection) these will be presented before their Lord and the witnesses (the prophets and angels) will say: 'These are those who lied against their Lord!' Beware! the curse of Allah is on the unjust."

The Court of the Resurrection contains many witnesses:

A) The Lord who is a witness to all of our conduct:

"Verily, Allah is a witness for everything."[7]

B) The Blessed Prophet (S):

"How will it be then when We bring from every People a witness, and We bring you a witness over those witnesses? [8]

C) The Immaculate Imams (as)

"And thus have We made you an Ummah of middling stand that you may be witnesses over mankind..."[9]

According to some Islamic traditions, what is meant by Ummah (nation) here are the Immaculate Imams, for other individuals in the nation are not eligible for serving as witnesses on that Day owing to their lack of knowledge and their not being infallible.

D) The Angels,

"And every soul shall come forth, with each will be a driver, and a witness." [10]

On the Day of Resurrection every person will be accompanied with two angels; one of them drives him and the other is a witness over him.

E) The Earth:

"On that Day, she (the earth) will recount (all) her news."[11]

F) Conscience:

"Read your book; your own self is sufficient as a reckoner against you this Day."[12]

G) One's Bodily Organs:

"On the Day (of Resurrection), their tongue, and their hands, and their feet shall bear witness against them as to what they used to do." [13]

H) Time: Imam Sajjad (as) states in the sixth prayer of the Sahifa that:

"Today (on the Day of Resurrection) is a new day which will testify as to the kind of conduct we have had."

I) Performance:

"...and what they had done they shall find present (there)..."[14]

Question: The Qur'an has employed the word /'azlamu/ when referring to many sins while the utmost oppression must be one and not more than one. Why is it so?

Answer: This inference is used in 15 cases, all of which are concerned with spiritual mental deviations irrespective of polytheism, false accusations, covering up the truth and withholding it, and obstruction of the way and of the remembrance of Allah. Therefore, the most important of the oppressions is intellectual, cultural, and ideological.

The Qur'an in this verse, as well as in a few verses which come later, explains the situation, profile, and the fate of those who falsely accuse Allah as follows:

The most oppressive individual is he who is deprived of Divine favors, denies the Day of Resurrection, distorts facts, obstructs the way of Allah and is neither able to escape Allah's domination in this world nor to seek assistance on the Day of Resurrection.

He is the one whose punishment is multi-fold, his life has gone with the wind, his endeavors have become null and void, and his life and soul have become lost.

Therefore, false accusations against Allah are the greatest of the unjust. Writers and preachers of religion must be on guard against wrong words and their writings and keep in mind the fact that there are

many witnesses who will testify as to what they have said and written on the Day of Resurrection.

The verse says:

"And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah?** (**On the Day of Resurrection**) **these will be presented before their Lord and the witnesses** (**the prophets and angels**) **will say: 'These are those who lied against their Lord!' Beware! the curse of Allah is on the unjust."

Surah Hud – Verse 19

الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجاً وَهُمْ بِالأَخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ

19. "Those who hinder** (**people**) **from the path of Allah and seek to make it crooked, and they are themselves unbelievers as to the hereafter."

Enemies obstruct the Path of Allah through various methods including heresy, false accusations, personal interpretations, forging traditions, provoking skepticism, emptying mosques, abandoning and neglecting the teaching of Ahl-ul-Bayt, standing in the way of good conduct, fabricating pretexts to justify immoral entertainment, setting forth insignificant issues of hero worship, recommending and propagating falsehood, humiliating faithful believers, forbidding what has been allowed by religion, giving undue appreciation and recommendation of what is not appropriate, glorifying despots, etc.

Among the clear examples of obstruction of Allah's Path, one may cite closing the gate of the 'House of Allah', closing the 'House of the men of Allah,' and the 'House of the Ahl-ul-Bayt of the Prophet (S)' as well as that of the immaculate and just leaders.

The enemy obstructs the Path first, and if he is unable to do so, he diverts the course leading to the Path.

The verse says:

"Those who hinder** (**people**) **from the path of Allah and seek to make it crooked, and they are themselves unbelievers as to the hereafter."

Surah Hud – Verse 20

أُوْلَئِكَ لَمْ يَكُونُوا مُعْجِزِينَ فِي الاَرْضِ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَوْلِيَآءَ يُضَاعَفُ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مَا كَانُوا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ السَّمْعَ وَمَا كَانُوا يُبْصِرُونَ

20. "They will in no wise frustrate** (**His design**) **on the earth, nor shall there be for them any

protectors besides Allah! The penalty will be doubled for them. They could not bear to hear (the truth), and they used not to see (it)."

How can one reconcile the issue of the manifestation and multiplication of Allah's punishment with Divine justice which seem to be incompatible with each other?

Answer: He who misleads others, owing to his power and position, naturally must be held responsible for their faults.

Thus, the sin committed by knowledgeable people, because of their social function, is manifold when compared to that committed by ordinary people and this is identical with justice. Any way, the oppressors are under the yoke of the Divine wrath and power, and will meet their own doom.

The holy verse says:

"They will in no wise frustrate (His design) on the earth, nor shall there be for them any protectors besides Allah! The penalty will be doubled for them. They could not bear to hear (the truth), and they used not to see (it)."

Those who make false accusations must forget and give up the idea that being the support of despots and being among their entourage will save them.

Surah Hud – Verses 21 - 22

أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ

لا جَرَمَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ هُمُ الأَخْسَرُونَ

21. "These are they who have lost their own selves, and that which they used to invent has failed them."
22. "Assuredly, they will be the greatest losers in the Hereafter."

In Islamic culture, the world is compared to a marketplace where people are salesmen and the purchasing group consists of Allah, the Satan, one's passionate self, etc., the number of which is numerous.

The merchandise is the soul, property and performance. This merchandise is on offer at an expensive or cheap price. Hence the words /'ajr/ (recompense), /awab/ (reward), /di'f/ and /'id'af/, are used frequently in the Qur'an to mean recompense; while the terms /xusr/ (loss) and /xusranun mubin/ (manifest loss) and /axsarin/ (the most losers) are used about damage.

The important warning is that we know that every loss can be compensated except the passage of one's lifetime which cannot be redeemed.

The holy verse says:

"These are they who have lost their own selves, and that which they used to invent has failed them."

Sometimes, wealth and property, position and power or one's social status are lost. At other times, man himself and his humanity are lost which is the greatest of all losses.

Therefore, worldly losses can be compensated but losses incurred in the Hereafter cannot be replaced.

The verse says:

"Assuredly, they will be the greatest losers in the Hereafter."

Surah Hud – Verse 23

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَخْبَتُوا إِلَي رَبِّهِمْ أُوْلَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

23. "Verily those who believe and work righteousness, and humble themselves before their Lord, they will be Companions of the Garden, (paradise), they will abide therein for ever."

The Qur'anic word /axbatu/, is derived from /xabt/ which means both submission and humility as well as comfort and confidence.

Reward and encourage have also been mentioned along with warnings and threats.

Following the aforementioned verses which explained the fate of those who are involved in giving false accusations, this verse exposes the profile of those involved in righteous deeds.

It implies that those who believe and perform righteous acts and behave well, who submit themselves before Allah and are confident of His promises, will be among the Companions of Paradise, remaining there forever.

The verse says:

"Verily those who believe and work righteousness, and humble themselves before their Lord, they will be Companions of the Garden, (paradise), they will abide therein for ever."

Surah Hud – Verse 24

مَثَلُ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ كَالاَعْمَي وَالاَصَمّ وَالْبَصِيرِ وَالسَّمِيعِ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلاً أَفَلا تَذَكَّرُونَ

24. "The similitude the two parties is like the blind and the deaf, and the seeing (ones) and the hearing (ones). Are they equal in likeness? Will you not then admonish?"

As one's body has eyes and ears, one's heart also has eyes and ears and as the blind and the deaf do not perceive the sensations of the world and do not enjoy them, obstinate individuals also stop enjoying the Divine acquaintance and do not enjoy it.

Therefore, the Qur'an inquires whether the deaf and the blind are equal to the hearing and the seeing in the eyes of a wise man. And as they are not equal, the faithful and the unbeliever are not identical either. Do you not meditate in this matter so as to attain to the truth?

The verse says:

"The similitude the two parties is like the blind and the deaf, and the seeing (ones) and the hearing (ones). Are they equal in likeness? Will you not then admonish?"

1. Surah 'A'raf, No. 7, verse 150
2. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 88
3. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 88
4. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 23
5. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 88
6. Ibid
7. Surah Hajj, No. 22, verse 17
8. Surah Nisa, No. 4, verse 41
9. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 143
10. Surah Qaf, No. 50, verse 21
11. Surah Zilzal, No. 99, verse 4
12. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 14
13. Surah Nur, No. 24, verse 24
14. Surah Kahf, No. 18, verse 49

Section 3: The Ministry of Noah

Surah Hud – Verses 25 - 26

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحاً إِلَى قَوْمِهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ

أَلاَّ تَعْبُدُوا إِلاَّ اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ أَلِيمٍ

25. "And verily, We sent Noah to his people, (saying:) 'I am a plain warner for you'."
26. "That you serve none but Allah; verily, I do fear for you the penalty of a painful day."

Hadrat Noah is the first prophet among those possessors of determination /'ulul 'azm/ i.e., among the major prophets, who stood up against polytheism and idol worship, and as the human generation traces its genealogy back to him after the drowning of the unbelievers, he is addressed as the second Adam and, since his life-time was longest comparing that of other prophets, he is called Master of the Prophets.

Allah, the Gracious, has told the story of the prophets of the past to warn the unbelievers and to soothe the Prophet (S). Taking up the story of Noah, the Qur'an says that he was sent to his people so as to warn them against worshipping other than Allah.

The verse says:

"And verily, We sent Noah to his people, (saying:) 'I am a plain warner for you'."

He started His call in a sincere manner inviting them to accept monotheism because it was the most supreme ideal, for no other act of worship would be accepted before the All-knowing Allah, the sole and only Creator of the world.

The verse says:

"That you serve none but Allah; verily, I do fear for you the penalty of a painful day."

Surah Hud – Verse 27

فَقَالَ الْمَلأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن قَوْمِهِ مَا نَرَاكَ إِلاَّ بَشَراً مِثْلَنَا وَمَا نَرَاكَ اتَّبَعَكَ إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَرَاذِلُنَا بَادِيَ الرَّأْيِ وَمَا نَرَى لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِن فَضْلٍ بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كَاذِبِينَ

27. "Then the chiefs of those who disbelieved among his people said: 'We do not see (in) you but a man like ourselves, nor do we see that any follow you but those who are the meanest among us, at first thought, nor do we see (in) you any excellence over us; nay, we think you are liars!'"

The opponents of the truth sometimes belittle and endeavor to weaken the Divine leaders. They claim that prophets are men like others and not superior to them.

The verse says:

"Then the chiefs of those who disbelieved among his people said: 'We do not see (in) you but a man like ourselves..."

At other times, humiliating the prophets' followers, they claim that they are some unimportant and insignificant people.

The verse continues saying:

"...nor do we see that any follow you but those who are the meanest among us, at first thought..."

At other times, they despise the entire school claiming that the adherents of this school are naive and superficial who lack any depth of vision.

The verse says:

"...nor do we see (in) you any excellence over us; nay, we think you are liars!'"

Arrogant people often detest being equal with the masses, especially with those who are deprived. Usually, the aristocrats have always allied themselves with the opponents of the prophets but those who take less interest in worldly affairs, become believers more quickly and are more decent.

Therefore, the opponents of the prophets lack reasoning and whatever they claim is based on conjecture, speculation and on hallucinations.

Surah Hud – Verse 28

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنْتُ عَلَي بَيِّنَةٍ مِن رَبِّي وءَاتَانِي رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِندِهِ فَعُمِّيَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنُلْزِمُكُمُوهَا وَأَنتُمْ لَهَا كَارِهُونَ

28. "He said: "O my People! Bethink you, if I be upon a clear proof from my Lord, and He has grant me mercy from His Presence, but has been obscured for you; shall we compel you to (accept) it while you are averse to it?"

This holy verse provides answers to two objections of the unbelievers which were raised in the foregoing verse.

The unbelievers used to say that Noah (as) was a man like themselves. This verse answers that although in appearance the prophets are like the unbelievers, they have merited Allah's particular approbation since they receive revelations and perform miracles.

The unbelievers would say that the followers of Hadrat Noah (as) were some simple minded, short sighted, and naive people. The verse answers that such was not the case, although apparently they were weaker than the unbelievers, they had become believers through witnessing the proofs shown to them by their prophet. Their conviction, indeed, was not baseless and without reason.

Despite all the false accusations and groundless protests, the prophets have always displayed a tolerant attitude towards their foes and they still took recourse to logic, reasoning and appeal to their emotions.

Of all the things required of the prophets, offering proofs to the people and performing miracles combined with decisive reasoning leave no room for any excuses. Nothing must withhold people from exercising their free choice. Once they stick to their beliefs, they will prosper and once they refuse to do so they will be tormented. There is no compulsion in that.

The verse says:

"He said: "O my People! Bethink you, if I be upon a clear proof from my Lord, and He has grant me mercy from His Presence, but has been obscured for you; shall we compel you to (accept) it while you are averse to it?"

Surah Hud – Verse 29

وَيَا قَوْمِ لاَ أَسْأَلُكُم عَلَيْهِ مَالاً إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلاَّ عَلَي اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَاْ بِطَارِدِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّهُم مُلاَقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَلَكِنّي أَرَاكُمْ قَوْماً تَجْهَلُونَ

29. "And O' my People! I ask you no wealth for it. My reward is only upon Allah, and I will not drive away those who believe, (for) verily they shall meet their Lord, but I see you are an ignorant people."

The secret of a preacher's success is his lack of over expectation with regard to people and not letting himself be stymied by the objections of the wealthy corrupt classes.

If the prophets were seeking illegitimate profits, they would call on the aristocrats and not the poor, on the princes not on the paupers. The followers of the prophets are the oppressed people and they never neglect them.

The prophets are never greedy for the people's property. Their sole purpose, according to their mission is to save the people from their ignorance and from the Divine punishment.

The verse says:

"And O' my People! I ask you no wealth for it. My reward is only upon Allah, and I will not drive

away those who believe, (for) verily they shall meet their Lord, but I see you are an ignorant people."

Surah Hud – Verse 30

وَيَا قَوْمِ مَن يَنصُرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِن طَرَدتُّهُمْ أَفَلاَ تَذَكَّرُونَ

30. "And O my people! Who will help me against Allah if I drove them away? Will you not then reflect?"

The Qur'an further explains the situation in this verse, and from the tongue of the prophet to his people, it implies that if he cast out this group, who in this world can come to his assistance in that great Court of Justice?

The verse says:

"And O my people! Who will help me against Allah if I drove them away?..."

Driving out the righteous and faithful believers is no easy matter. They can bear witness against the prophet on the Day of Resurrection and no one will be able to defend him then, while, at the same time, the Divine punishment might also face him in this world. And contemplating this would lead to knowledge that whatever the prophet said was identical with the truth.

The verse says:

"...Will you not then reflect?"

Surah Hud – Verse 31

وَلاَ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِندِي خَزَآئِنُ اللَّهِ وَلاَ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلاَ أَقُولُ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ وَلاَ أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ تَزْدَرِي أَعْيُنُكُمْ لَن يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْراً
اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ إِنِّي إِذاً لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

31. "And I do not say to you (that) Allah's treasures are with me; nor do I know the Unseen, nor do I claim to be an angel; nor do I say, about those whom your eyes do despise, (that) Allah will never grant them any good. Allah is well aware of what is in their hearts; (for) verily then I should be of the unjust."

Knowledge of Unseen, regarding anything and every condition, is absolutely with Allah. The Qur'an says: ***"And with Him are the keys of the Unseen. None but He knows them..."***[1] which means that the keys to the invisible world are in His Own authority.

However, due to Divine Providence and according to the Divine Will, men of Allah will sometimes find windows opened up for them. The Qur'an in regard to this fact says:

"These are of the tidings of the Unseen which We reveal unto you..."[2]

Therefore, Allah's prophets are knowledgeable about the invisible world as the Qur'an states:

"The Knower of the Unseen! So He does not reveal His secrets to any,"

"Except to him whom He chooses as an apostle..."[3].

This verse means that He is knowledgeable about the invisible world, and no one is aware of this knowledge of the invisible except those whom He has selected from among His prophets.

Not only the knowledge of the invisible world is His own prerogative but the power to perform extraordinary works also rests with Him, though Allah can and will bestow something of whatever aspect of His power which He deems worthy upon anyone He chooses and to the extent that He wishes. For example, it is mentioned in the Qur'an that death and life are in His Power:

"Verily, it is He who makes one die and live".[4]

However, the Qur'an also says that Hadrat 'Isa (as) made the dead live with His permission;

"I make the dead live with His permission."[5]

Although Allah takes lives ***"Allah takes the souls..."***[6] yet angels take lives with His permission:

"The angel of death shall cause you to die..."[7]

And although He is the sole Creator of all, ***"Allah is the Creator of every thing..."***[8], But Hadrat 'Isa creates, however, with His permission:

"...and when you did make of clay a thing like the shape of a bird, by My leave..."[9]

Theological research has shown that no one individual existing among the jinn and mankind can have access to the science of the invisible world apart from a limited amount of it which depends upon their potentialities.

This type of knowledge in relation to them is not a science of the invisible after it is bestowed on them although it might be so for others. On the other hand, Allah has made the prophets and the Imams knowledgeable about the invisible world and aware of the past and future.

For example, the blessed Prophet (S) had foretold the news of the 'Imamat' of twelve persons, the sufferings inflicted on them, the intentional disappearance of Hadrat Mahdi (as) and his reappearance, the events occurring during the last days, the establishment of his government, and the resurrection of

the dead on the Day of Judgment, other similar matters have also been passed down to us from the other Imams (as).

Without doubt whatever has not been given to us in this respect is due to the lack of capacity on the part of the average man or has been withheld for reasons known only to Allah.[10]

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an goes back to the subject of oppressed believers, emphasizing that the prophet cannot say that those whom the disbelievers despise will not be rewarded by Allah.

On the contrary, the blessings of this world and those of the next belong to the oppressed even though they are empty handed in this world. It is the wrongdoers who in their infatuation with the world consider goodness to be confined to wealth, position, youth, and the like, demonstrating their lack of knowledge of the truth and its true meaning.

Even if one assumes that the oppressors are right and that the oppressed are indeed wretches, still Allah is more aware than us of what is in their minds, for we know nothing about them except what is indicative of their good faith and sincerity, and thus we are obliged to accept them.

I am only required to judge and relate with men based on their outward behavior, judging a man on the basis of his inward nature belongs to Allah alone, and if I act otherwise, I will certainly be among the oppressors.

The verse says:

"And I do not say to you (***that***) ***Allah's treasures are with me; nor do I know the Unseen, nor do I claim to be an angel; nor do I say, about those whom your eyes do despise,*** (***that***) ***Allah will never grant them any good. Allah is well aware of what is in their hearts;*** (***for***) ***verily then I should be of the unjust."***

Surah Hud – Verse 32

قَالُوا يَانُوحُ قَدْ جَادَلْتَنَا فَاَكْثَرْتَ جِدَالَنَا فَأْتِنَا بِمَا تِعِدُنَآ إِن كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

32. "They said: 'O' Noah! You have disputed with us and multiplied disputation with us. Bring us then what you have promised us (***of divine punishment***)***, if you are truthful.'"***

Disputes are only valuable whenever they are honestly in pursuit of the truth and done in a respectful and polite manner; as the Qur'an says:

"...and argue with them in the best manner."[11]

If the dispute is based on what is wrong, it is of no value, as the holy Qur'an says:

“…and they disputed by means of the falsehood in order to stamp out the truth thereby…”[12]

Thus, as the unbelievers did not have logic on their side and accepted no logical arguments, they sought to bring the debate to and end by telling him to bring unto them what he had promised.

The verse says:

“They said: ‘O’ Noah! You have disputed with us and multiplied disputation with us. Bring us then what you have promised us (of divine punishment), if you are truthful.’”

Therefore Hadrat Noah (as) cursed them after they had made their declaration that they wanted him to send down their destruction.

Surah Hud – Verse 33

قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَأْتِيكُم بِهِ اللَّهُ إِن شَآءَ وَمَآ أَنتُم بِمُعْجِزِينَ

33. “He said: ‘Verily Allah will bring it to you, if He wills, and you will not be able to frustrate (it).’”

Noah replies that the realization of the punishment for their heedlessness and obstinacy is not up to him but it is dependent upon the Will of Allah. He himself is only a messenger and a sincere servant of the Almighty.

They should beware, however, that when the command for the punishment is issued they cannot escape His power for they are at His mercy and they will not be able to take refuge anywhere.

The verse says:

“He said: ‘Verily Allah will bring it to you, if He wills, and you will not be able to frustrate (it).’”

Surah Hud – Verse 34

وَلاَ يَنفَعُكُمْ نُصْحِي إِنْ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَنصَحَ لَكُمْ إِن كَانَ اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَن يُغْوِيَكُمْ هُوَ رَبُّكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

34. “And my advice will not profit you, should I intend to give you advice, if Allah wills to lead you astray. He is your Lord and unto Him you will be returned.”

Noah said that his advice would have been of no use to them even though he sincerely wished to counsel them.

The punishment and retribution of the evildoers is up to Allah, and prophets are nothing but agents for

conveying the Divine message and admonishing the people.

There is no way for man to resist or escape Divine justice and punishment, for Allah’s Will overcomes all other wills. Even if one is not punished in this world, Allah will deal with him on the Day of Resurrection, and then he will see the final result of his deeds.

However, the Arabic word /nush/ refers to the saying or deed by which sincere reformation is achieved, and the Arabic word /qayy/is called to that kind of ignorance which has its roots in corrupt and evil convictions.

The difference between /’idlal/ and /’iqwa/ is that the doer of the former knows the destination but he has lost the way, while with respect to /’iqwa/ the aim and intention are both unknown.

Attributing the actions of /’idlal/ and /’iqwa/ to Allah is in the way of punishing those who are misled because of the obstinacy and corruption of their character. It does not mean that from the beginning and without prior premise Allah goes on leading one astray.

Surah Hud – Verse 35

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ إِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهُ فَعَلَيَّ إِجْرَامِي وَأَنَاْ بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُجْرِمُونَ

35. “Or they say: ‘He has forged it.’ Say: ‘If I have forged it, upon me is my sin, and I am quit of the sins you commit’.”

Some of the unbelievers among the Quraysh claimed that these stories of the prophets had been fabricated by the Prophet himself (S) which he then attributed to Allah.

The Almighty instructs him to tell them that if he had fabricated them, it would be he alone who would suffer the consequences and they would not be held responsible, but the converse is also true with respect to their transgressions, that he is just as free of responsibility for their sins and offences.

His duty is only to convey the message and nothing else, whether or not they accepted or rejected it.

The verse says:

“Or they say: ‘He has forged it.’ Say: ‘If I have forged it, upon me is my sin, and I am quit of the sins you commit’.”

Apparently because of the Qur’anic word /qul/, which means ‘say’, and owing to the news about the unbelievers of Mecca and the Prophet of Islam, the verse relates to the Apostle of Islam (S).

Anyway, he who commits an act will only be held responsible and it is no one else’s fault. The Prophet

(S) will not be involved in their sins either.

The fact that they did not accept the faith and attributed false accusations to the Qur'an, calling the Prophet a liar, all together resulted in grievous consequences while on his part, he had performed his mission in admonishing and conveying the message to them.

The Arabic term /'ijram/ and /jurm/ mean the picking of unripe fruits and which thereafter have been referred to whatever indecent behavior or offence or sin.

1. Surah Al-An'am, No. 6, verse 59
2. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 49
3. Surah The Jinn, No. 72, verses 26, 27
4. Surah An-Najm, No. 53, verse 44
5. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 49
6. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 42
7. Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32, verse 11
8. Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 16
9. Surah Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 110
10. Refer to Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol.35 p.420, 'Usul ul Kafi, vol.1, p.225 Yanabi' ul Mawaddah, vol.1, p.605; Kashf-ul Ghumma, vol.3, p.340, Safinat-ul-Bihar 'Uyun Akhbar-ur-Rida, vol.2, p.237; Kitab al Sirat ul Haqq, vol.3 p.340, 'Uyun-i-Akhbar-ur-Rida, vol.2, Nahjul Balaqah and Haqayiq by Ibn Shahr-'Ashub, and other books regarding the 'Knowledge of the Imams.
11. Surah An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 125
12. Surah Ghafir, No. 40, verse 5

Section 4: The Fate of Those Who Disbelieved Noah

Surah Hud – Verse 36

وَأُوحِيَ إِلَي نُوحٍ أَنَّهُ لَن يُؤْمِنَ مِن قَوْمِكَ إِلاَّ مَن قَدْ ءَامَنَ فَلاَ تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ

36. "And it was revealed unto Noah: 'None of your people will believe except those who have already believed, so do not grieve as to what they used to do'."

The previous holy verses thoroughly covered the stage of inviting the people to the religion on Divine unity and Noah's indefatigable propagation and dissemination of the Divine message which he accomplished using all the devices he had available. This verse deals with the second stage of the campaign; the final stage of the propagation phase.

Here, the second phase of the campaign has not been dealt with, it is the end of the propagation stage, and the second stage is the preparation for the Divine purge.

At first, we read that it was revealed to Noah that no one else except those who had already adhered to him would become believers.

The verse says:

"And it was revealed unto Noah: 'None of your people will believe except those who have already believed..."

Reference is here made to the fact that alignments had already been made and finalized and no further call or reformation would have been useful, hence a state of readiness for the upheaval and the purge must be declared.

Towards the end of the verse, consoling Noah, the Qur'an implies that he should not despair at all despite whatever wrongful deeds they used to do.

The verse says:

"...so do not grieve as to what they used to do'."

In the meantime, one can infer from this verse that Allah made those aspects of the knowledge of the secrets of the Unseen that He had deemed necessary, accessible so that His prophet should know.

Surah Hud – Verse 37

وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُم مُّغْرَقُونَ

37. "And make you the Ark under Our eyes, and as We reveal; and address Me not about those who are unjust; verily they shall be drowned."

At any rate, this unruly and obstinate group must be punished with the kind of punishment that would remove their polluting existence from the entire world, thus liberating the faithful believers from their yoke.

At first, the Qur'an implies that Allah commanded Noah to build an Ark according to His order and in His presence.

The verse says:

"And make you the Ark under Our eyes, and as We reveal;..."

Towards the end of the verse, Noah is warned against any form of mediation on behalf of the oppressors. Saying to him that he should not ask for any amnesty or clemency for they are certainly condemned to chastisement and to be drowned as soon as they are convicted.

The verse says:

"...and address Me not about those who are unjust; verily they shall be drowned."

One can very easily infer from this sentence that taking up the act of mediation requires certain preconditions which, when they are lacking in someone, even Allah's prophet is not rightful to mediate on his behalf.

Surah Hud – Verse 38

وَيَصْنَعُ الْفُلْكَ وَكُلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلأٌ مِن قَوْمِهِ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُ قَالَ إِن تَسْخَرُوا مِنَّا فَإِنَّا نَسْخَرُ مِنكُم كَمَا تَسْخَرُونَ

38. "And he began making the Ark; and whenever the chiefs of his people passed by him they scoffed at him. He said: 'If you scoff at us, we (***too***) ***shall surely scoff at you, as you scoff '."***

Let us briefly discuss the situation of Noah's People. Instead of taking Noah's call seriously for a moment, and allowing some room for accepting the probability of the truth of his repeated calls which might have had their origins in Divine Providence and that the subject of punishment through storms might be serious, Noah's people went on mocking and ridiculing as is the case with all arrogant and vainglorious people, however he went on building the Ark.

Whenever some of his people passed by him they would watch Noah and his companions struggle to prepare the timber, nails and other ship-building instruments, and they would laugh and ridicule them. The verse says:

"And he began making the Ark; and whenever the chiefs of his people passed by him they scoffed at him..."

However, Noah pursued his goal with an extraordinary persistence whose origins lay in his faith, and paying no attention to what they said, he made rapid progress in his efforts. Day after day, the structure of the ship came closer and closer to completion. Noah would sometimes raise his head, and told them this short out expressive statement:

"*You ridicule us today, but we will surely do the same thing to you soon, the day when you are caught, lost and wandering in the storm, terrified, running in all directions with no shelter, crying in the midst of the waves, begging for mercy, the believers then and there will laugh at your negligence, and ignorance.*"

The verse says:

"...He said: 'If you scoff at us, we (too) shall surely scoff at you, as you scoff '."

Surah Hud – Verse 39

فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَن يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخزِيهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُقِيمٌ

39. "So you shall know soon to whom a Penalty (that) will confound him comes, and upon whom there shall fall a lasting Penalty."

The meaning of the punishment which is modified by the term /yuxzihi/ is the devastating worldly punishment, i.e. their being drowned which would humiliate and belittle them, whilst the meaning of the term /'a□abun muqim/ is the punishment to be imposed on the Day of Resurrection.

The verse says:

"So you shall know soon to whom a Penalty (that) will confound him comes, and upon whom there shall fall a lasting Penalty."

In some Islamic narrations, one reads that forty years prior to the appearance of the storm, a type of disease had spread among the women of the People of Noah which had prevented them from giving birth to children. This event, in fact, marked the beginning of their punishment.

Noah's Ark

Noah's Ark, undoubtedly, was not an ordinary ship and its manufacture in those days with the technology of the time was not easily accomplished. It was a large vessel which, in addition to the believers, accommodated pairs of an extremely wide variety of animals, it also carried a large amount of food supplies for the human passengers, as well as food for the animals which was unprecedented for that time.

In particular, this ship had to be safely navigated through a sea that covered the entire world with mountain-sized waves and still remain intact. In their commentaries, some Qur'an commentators have expressed their admiration for the magnitude of the ship. Refer to the comments of Majma'-ul-Bayan for further information.

Surah Hud – Verse 40

حَتَّي إِذَا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ قُلْنَا احْمِلْ فِيهَا مِن كُلٍّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلاَّ مَن سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ وَمَنْ ءَامَنَ وَمَآ ءَامَنَ مَعَهُ إِلاَّ قَلِيلٌ

40. "(Thus it was) till, when Our Command came, and the oven gushed forth (water)! We said: "Embark therein, of each kind a pair, and your family (apart from your wife and a son) – except for those him against whom the Word has already passed – and whoever believed. But there believed not with him but a few."

The Onset of the Flood

In the previous verses, we noted how Noah and the true believers became occupied in building the Ark of Salvation and, while subjected to all kinds of difficulties and sarcasms of the arrogant unbelieving majority, they prepared themselves for the flood.

Here, the Qur'an expounds upon the third highlight or the climax of the story which relates to the punishment inflicted upon this oppressive nation.

First of all, it says that this situation continued until Allah's command was issued and the dawning of the divine punishment appeared, and waters of the earth gushed forth. The verse says:

"(Thus it was) till, when Our Command came, and the oven gushed forth (water)!..."

Those people who were inattentive and unaware probably noticed the bubbling water in their wells, but, as usual, they did not heed these Divine warnings much less try to understand their meaning. They probably did not pay any attention to it at all to see if a cataclysm was about to occur, and maybe to at least entertain the possibility that Noah's warnings might be real.

At this time, the Command was issued to Noah that he should put a pair of each animal on the Ark so that they would not be exterminated in the flood. And that he, his family, except those for whom word had already had been marked for their punishment, and the believers should board the Ark of Salvation. However few were those who had believed in him.

The verse says:

"...We said: "Embark therein, of each kind a pair, and your family (apart from your wife and a son) – except for those him against whom the Word has already passed - and whoever believed. But there believed not with him but a few."

This verse, on the one hand, refers to the wife of Noah and his son 'Kan'an', who, deviating from the path of belief and being in collaboration with the sinners, had broken off their relationship with Noah and were not entitled to embark on the Ark.

On the other hand, it refers to the limited success that Noah (as) had had in persuading people to follow his way of life during his long years of continuous struggle that had resulted in getting only a small number of believers.

Surah Hud – Verse 41

وَقَالَ ارْكَبُوا فِيهَا بِسْمِ اللَّهِ مَجْرِيهَا وَمُرْسَاهَا إِنَّ رَبِّي لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

41. "And he (Noah) said: 'Embark in it! In Allah's Name shall be its sailing and its berthing. Verily my Lord is the Forgiving, the Merciful.'"

Noah assembled his relatives and companions quickly and as the time of the devastating storm and the striking Punishment approached, he ordered them to embark in the name of Allah and to remember Allah both when the Ark was in motion or standing still for He is the All Forgiving, the All Compassionate.

The verse says:

"And he (Noah) said: 'Embark in it! In Allah's Name shall be its sailing and its berthing. Verily my Lord is the Forgiving, the Merciful.'"

Owing to His blessings, Allah had made these instruments available to you, His faithful servants, and because of His forgiveness, He may pardon your offences.

Surah Hud – Verse 42

وَهِيَ تَجْرِي بِهِمْ فِي مَوْجٍ كَالْجِبَالِ وَنَادَي نوحٌ ابْنَهُ وَكَانَ فِي مَعْزِلٍ يَا بُنَيَّ ارْكَبْ مَعَنَا وَلاَ تَكُن مَعَ الكَافِرِينَ

42. "So, it sailed with them amid waves like mountains. And Noah called out to his son and he was aloof: 'O my son! Embark with us and be not with the unbelievers.'"

At long last, the final moment arrived and the Command for the punishment of this unruly nation was issued. Dark and ominous clouds darker than the darkest night covered the entire sky, massing on top of each other in an unprecedented manner. There was the terrible clap of thunder and the flash of lightning ceaselessly filled up the sky. They informed of a great disaster mounting in magnitude and terrible in character.

It started raining. The droplets grew bigger and bigger in size. The level of underground water rose and gushing fountains emerged everywhere.

The surface of the earth was soon turned into an ocean, and with the wind howling, mountain-like waves raged over this ocean, rising over each other, to come crashing down upon the surface of the stormy sea. Noah's Ark parted the mountain-like waves and made headway.

The verse says:

"So, it sailed with them amid waves like mountains. And Noah called out to his son and he was aloof:..."

Addressing his son, who was standing on the side and not far from him, Noah shouted:

"...'O my son! Embark with us and be not with the unbelievers."

However, his son's companionship and association with evil company had overtaken him to such an extent that his father's compassion against annihilation made no impact upon him.

Surah Hud – Verse 43

قَالَ سَاَوِي إِلَي جَبَلٍ يَعْصِمُني مِنَ الْمَآءِ قَالَ لاَ عَاصِمَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِلاَّ مَن رَحِمَ وَحَالَ بَيْنَهُمَا الْمَوْجُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُغْرَقِينَ

43. "He said: 'I will take refuge in a mountain; it will save me from the water.' Said he (***Noah***)***: 'Today, there is no protector from Allah's decree but*** (***of whom***) ***He has mercy.' And the waves came between them, and he was among the drowned."***

This obstinate and shortsighted son, thinking that he could escape Allah's anger, shouted implying that his father should not be worried about him. He would take to the mountain which could never be overtaken by flood-waters, and it would shelter him.

The verse says:

"He said: 'I will take refuge in a mountain; it will save me from the water.'..."

Noah still did not despair. He advised his son once more, so as to lead him onto the True Path and overcome his son's shortsightedness and arrogance. He said to him that no power was able to save anyone from Allah's command. The only hope of being saved remained for him who was covered by Allah's blessing.

The verse says:

"...Said he (***Noah***)***: 'Today, there is no protector from Allah's decree but*** (***of whom***) ***He has mercy.'..."***

At this time, a wave, coming between them, overwhelmed his son, uprooting him as if he was a straw, and placed him among the drowned ones.

The verse continues saying:

"...And the waves came between them, and he was among the drowned."

The Educational implications of Noah's Flood

As we notice, the main aim of the Qur'an is to teach us lessons by recounting the didactic teachings of past history, from which one can draw the following inferences:

1- Purging the Face of the Earth

It is true that Allah is Compassionate and Kind. However, one must not forget that He is at the same time Wise. Whenever a nation becomes corrupt and does not answer the call of His messengers He judges it appropriate that that nation has no right to continue to live. Ultimately, their system will be overthrown through some natural or social revolutions.

This has not been confined to the Noah's nation, nor has it been confined to a particular time and place. As a result of the Divine Providence this has taken place throughout all ages and among all nations up to our time. The first and the second World Wars might be regarded as examples of such a purge.

2- Why Punishment Was Inflicted by a Flood

It is true that a corrupt nation must be exterminated, but their means of annihilation can vary. The holy verses of the Qur'an provide evidence that punishments are commensurate with sins of the nations punished.

The Pharaoh relied on the River Nile which was the backbone of his power, and, interestingly, it became the source of his annihilation.

The People of Noah was an agricultural and a livestock-breeding nation. That ungodly nation had relied upon rainfall for everything, and ultimately that very nation was wiped out by rainfall.

If we notice that our contemporary fellow human beings are being devastated with their most modern arms and ammunitions, we must not be surprised, for the advanced industries which they relied upon for the exploitation of oppressed nations, would be eventually used for their own destruction.

3- Unreliable Shelters of Straw

It is usual for everyone to take shelter to something when in need. Some take refuge in their wealth, some find shelter in their position, some rely upon their bodily strength, and finally, some rely upon their power of thinking.

However, as the above verses show, and as history has demonstrated for us, none of these can resist the command of the Almighty, and they will easily disappear just like a spider's web standing in the storms.

The ignorant and stiff-necked son of the prophet Noah committed the same fault. He thought that the

mountains could protect him from Allah's Wrath. But, what a grave mistake! The sweep of a wave put an end to his life.

4- The Ark of Salvation

As it has been quoted from the blessed Prophet (S) which is found in Shi'ah and Sunni books, the Prophet's family, which are the Imams and Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), as well as the content of the school of Islam, have been designated as 'the Ark of Salvation'.

That is, when tremendous changes occur in the mental, ideological, and social spheres of the Islamic community, the only means of salvation is to take refuge in the School of the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as).

The tradition which talks about this 'Ark of Salvation', the tradition of /safinah/ (ship) has been generally accepted by the consensus of the Imamiah scholars and by more than 100 Sunni scholars as well. It has been narrated as follows:

"Abuthar, the great companion of the Prophet (S), while holding the knob of the door of the Ka'bah, said with a loud voice:

'*O you people! I heard the Prophet (S) saying with my own ears, that the Prophet (S) said 'The similitude of my Ahl-ul-Bayt (family) is like Noah's Ark; he who embarks upon it is rescued, and he who distances himself from it, will perish.*'

Certainly, other great personalities at the dawn of Islam like Abu Sa'id Khedri, Ibn Abbas, Abdullah-Ibn Zubayr, and Anas Ibn-Malik have also quoted this tradition of the Prophet (S) which has been mentioned in the known books of the Ahl al Sunna.[1]

If we place this sequential 'Hadith" (tradition) alongside another sequential 'Hadith' which says: "*The Muslims will be divided into 73 sects, out of which only one will be saved,"* it would become evident that the Prophet (S) himself considered this sect to be the one that follows the Ahl-ul-Bayt, (as) and where he says *'He who embarks upon it will be saved,'* he means the same term /najiyah/ (saved).

Surah Hud – Verse 44

وَقِيلَ يَآ أَرْضُ ابْلَعِي مَآءَكِ وَيَا سَمَآءُ أَقْلِعِي وَغِيضَ الْمَآءُ وَقُضِيَ الأَمْرُ وَاسْتَوَتْ عَلي الْجُودِيِّ وَقِيلَ بُعْداً لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

44. "And it was said: 'O earth! Swallow down your water, and O sky! Withhold (your rain)!' And the water abated, and the matter was ended, and it (the Ark) rested on the (Mount) Judi, and it was said: 'Away with the unjust people!'"

The End of an Adventure

Noah left the ship up to Allah to take the rudder in His own hands. The waves had taken the ship in an undesignated direction. It has been quoted that the ship drifted for six months, passing by various places, including Mecca and the area surrounding the House of the Ka'ba.

Eventually, the decree ending the punishment and the return of the earth to its original state was issued. This verse explains the details and the conditions as well as the ensuing consequences in a concise, and at the same time, extraordinarily beautiful and eloquent manner in a few sentences.

The earth was commanded to absorb all its water and the sky was ordered to stop raining; the water subsisted and the work was accomplished.

The verse says:

"And it was said: 'O earth! Swallow down your water, and O sky! Withhold (your rain)!' And the water abated, and the matter was ended..."

The ship came to rest on the slopes of Mount Judi, which is a famous mountain near Mosul and it was at this time that it was proclaimed that off with the oppressors!

The verse says:

"...and it (the Ark) rested on the (Mount) Judi, and it was said: 'Away with the unjust people!'"

According to a number of Arab men of knowledge this verse is counted as the most eloquent and the most fluent of the Qur'anic verses.

According to the narrations and the books of Islamic history it is said that some unbelievers of the Quraysh, starting a campaign against the Qur'an, decided to fabricate verses like those of the Holy Book.

Their supporters provided them with the best food and drink for forty days including the kernel of a particular type of wheat, mutton, and old wine, so that their minds would be free of every kind of anxiety in order to compose the verses.

However, when they arrived at the above verse, they were so moved by it that they gazed at one another in surprise, saying:

"*These are words unsurpassed and unequalled by all means, and they do not resemble those made by human beings.*"

Saying this, they abandoned their decision and dispersed in despair.

Surah Hud – Verse 45

وَنَادَي نُوحٌ رَبَّهُ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي وَإِنَّ وَعْدَكَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنتَ أَحْكَمُ الْحَاكِمِينَ

45. "And Noah called unto his Lord, and said: "O my Lord! Verily, my son is of my family, and certainly Your promise is true and You are the Most just of Judges."

The Tragic Story of Noah's Son

In the foregoing verses, we noted that Noah's son did not listen to his father's advice, and did not stop being obstinate and stiff-necked to the last moment.

Another part of this same story is being dealt with here. That is, when Noah noticed his son buffeted by the waves, his fatherly emotions were provoked and he was reminded of Allah's promise that his family would be saved.

Facing Allah's sanctuary, he cried: that his son was a member of his family and He had promised him that He would save his family from the storm and His promises are always true. Allah is superior to all rulers, and He is a staunch keeper of His promise.

This promise refers to the same subject that was discussed in the fortieth verse of this Surah.

The verse says:

"And Noah called unto his Lord, and said: "O my Lord! Verily, my son is of my family, and certainly Your promise is true and You are the Most just of Judges."

Surah Hud – Verse 46

قَالَ يَا نُوحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ فَلا تَسْأَلْنِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنِّي أَعِظُكَ أَن تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

46. "He (Allah) said: 'O' Noah! Verily he is not of your family. Verily he is (of) conduct other than righteous. So do not ask of Me that of which you have no knowledge! I admonish you, lest you should be among the ignorant.'"

However, the thought provoking answer was provided, recalling a stern reality and the secondary status of the family relationship as separated from religious school of thought.

Allah tells Noah that he was not of his kind, on the contrary, he was an evil doer; a man of misdemeanor, whose family relationship was of no value and kinship of no avail owing to the fact that he was cut off

from Noah's school of thought, as such Noah should not make any requests about which he had no knowledge and therefore he should not be among the ignorant.

The verse says:

"He (Allah) said: 'O' Noah! Verily he is not of your family. Verily he is (of) conduct other than righteous. So do not ask of Me that of which you have no knowledge! I admonish you, lest you should be among the ignorant.'"

Imam Rida (as) has been quoted as saying that one day he asked his friends:

"*How do the common folk comment on this verse, which says:*

'...Verily he is (of) conduct other than righteous.'..."

One person from among the audience replied:

"*Some believe that it means that he who is referred to as Noah's son, that is, Kan'an was not his real son*."

The Imam (as) said:

"No it is not so, he was his real son, though Allah refused him his kinship when he committed sins and disobeyed, leading himself astray. Those who also belong to our school but refuse to obey Allah should not be considered as of us."

Surah Hud – Verse 47

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَسْأَلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَإِلاَّ تَغْفِرْ لِي وَتَرْحَمْنِي أَكُن مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

47. "He (Noah) said: 'O my Lord! Verily I seek refuge in You, lest I should ask You (for) that of which I have no knowledge. And unless You forgive me and have Mercy on me I should be of the losers'."

Noah discovered that his request for Allah's sanctuary had been out of the question, and that he should have never considered the salvation of such a son as being covered by Allah's promise to save his family members.

Therefore, turning to Him, he said that he would do seek refuge in Him for whatever good and evil he had no knowledge of, and so of making wrong requests. And unless He forgive him for having made such a request, and pardon him, he would be among the losers, indeed.

The verse says:

“He (Noah) said: ‘O my Lord! Verily I seek refuge in You, lest I should ask You (for) that of which I have no knowledge. And unless You forgive me and have Mercy on me I should be of the losers’.”

Surah Hud – Verse 48

قِيلَ يَا نُوحُ اهْبِطْ بِسَلَامٍ مِنَّا وَبَرَكَاتٍ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَي أُمَمٍ مِمَّن مَعَكَ وَأُمَمٌ سَنُمَتِّعُهُمْ ثُمَّ يَمَسُّهُم مِنَّا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

48. “It was said: ‘O Noah! Debark in peace from Us, and blessings upon you and on the nations of those with you; and nations whom We shall afford provision, then there shall afflict them from Us a painful chastisement’.”

Noah disembarked from the Ark safely. In this verse allusions are made to Noah’s disembarkation, as well as to the regeneration of the earth.

Firstly, the holy Qur’an implies that Noah was addressed saying: that he should disembark from the Ark safely with Blessings from Allah to him and to those with him.

The verse says:

“It was said: ‘O Noah! Debark in peace from Us, and blessings upon you and on the nations of those with you;...”

Obviously, the storm had devastated all signs of life, it destroyed cultivated lands, green pastures, and the orchards that had once flourished, and everything had been rendered infertile and arid.

At this time, Noah and his companions were in grave narrowness as far as their lives and nutrition were concerned. However, Allah reassured this group of believers that the Divine blessings would not be withheld from them and therefore, they should stop worrying about their livelihood because an appropriate and a blissful environment awaited them.

Then it adds that there would descend from this faithful group, nations of people on whom We Allah would bestow different kinds of Blessings although some of them would become arrogant and negligent, and consequently a grave punishment would be inflicted upon them.

The verse says:

“...and nations whom We shall afford provision, then there shall afflict them from Us a painful chastisement’.”

Surah Hud – Verse 49

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنبَآءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهآ إِلَيْكَ مَا كُنتَ تَعْلَمُهَآ أَنتَ وَلاَ قَوْمُكَ مِن قَبْلِ هَذَا فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

49. "(O Prophet!) these are of the tidings of the Unseen which We reveal unto you. Before this, neither you nor your people knew them. Therefore, be you patient, verily the end is for the pious ones."

This verse, by which ends the story of Noah in this Surah, sums up what had been covered previously. It implies that all this comes from the world beyond your powers of perception that Allah has revealed to the Prophet which neither he nor his people knew of before.

The verse says:

"(O Prophet!) these are of the tidings of the Unseen which We reveal unto you. Before this, neither you nor your people knew them…"

The gist of what was revealed to the Prophet (S) about Noah was that amidst all those difficulties he had encountered in the course of his calling, still he persevered. The Prophet too, should persevere because the final victory is reserved for those who are pious.

The verse says:

"…Therefore, be you patient, verily the end is for the pious ones."

One can infer from this verse that contrary to what some people think, the prophets were aware of the invisible world with condition that their knowledge had its source in the Divine will, and was confined to the extent that Allah wanted.

We shall now leave the story of Noah at this point, despite all the wonders and didactic lessons that can be drawn from it, and take up another great prophet, that is Hud, in whose name this Surah has been entitled.

The Feature of Noah in the Qur'an

The story of Noah (as) is mentioned in six of the suras of the Qur'an: Al-A'raf, Hud, Mu'minun, Shu'ara, Qamar, and Nuh but, it is most extensively discussed in the current Surah, Hud.

The appointment of Noah to prophecy was made after Adam (as) and during the time of the spread of unbelief, idol worship and oppression, his agenda consisted of enforcing and spreading monotheism and the daily prayers, encouraging people to decent conduct, dissuading them from committing the forbidden, and preaching justice, honesty and remaining faithful to one's own words.

The duration of Noah's prophecy extended for 950 years. When, at the end of his period, Allah told him that no one would accept his faith, he was discouraged and cursed the people. As a result, his wife and son, who did not belong to his school of thought, were drowned along with the other unbelievers.

He was the first prophet with a universal mission, a Book and a shari'ah (a specific religious law). The story of Noah (as) has also been mentioned in the Torah, as well in the Books of the Chaldeans, the Hindus, the Chinese, the Greeks and the Zoroastrians.

They have all regarded the Flood of Noah as a sign of Allah's anger because of people's oppression and corruption.

Noah's mission was universal. As the planet earth cannot remain without a savior, the drowning of all the people was due to Noah's (as) curse when he said:

"...My Lord! Leave not upon the earth any dweller from among the unbelievers." [2].

The holy Qur'an testifies to the fact that the flood did occur. On the other hand, if that great man's mission had been regional and the area where the flood occurred was also limited to that region, there would have been no need for putting a pair of each animal onto the Ark in order to preserve generations of the animal kingdom on the earth.

The Story of Noah (as)

Noah's story is that of a life spanning a one thousand year history embodying the story of a world-devastating flood, the account of the extermination of an entire generation of man and the beginning of a new chapter in human history on this earth.

It reflects the victory of truth against 'untruth' and Allah's acceptance of the prophets' curses. It is an example of how the relationship between a father and son can be broken for ideological reasons and it is a sign of the submission of existence in its entirety with respect to Allah's command.

It shows the importance of the conservation and preservation of animal life and also indicates the extent to which man may be so despicable that he may not be moved by the admonitions of the prophets, on the contrary, he can disrespect their followers as villains, and think he could escape Allah's wrath by taking refuge in physical structures like mountains.

1. Refer to Tabari's Al Mu'jam al Kabir, Hakim Neyshaburi in Al-Mustadrak, Ibn-Kathir in his Commentaries; Suyuti's Tarikh-ul-Khulafa; Ibn Qutayba's Uyun-ul Akhbar; Tabari's Zakha`ir-ul 'Uqba, Khatib ul Baghdadi in Tarikh ul Baghdad, Abu Na'im in Hilyat ul 'Auliya'; Ibn Abil Hadid in Sharh Nahj ul Balaqah, 'Alusi in Ruh ul Ma'ani; and other detailed books which have been mentioned in Ihqaq ul Haqq (vol.9) from P. 270 onwards. See also Nafahat ul Azhar fi Khulasah 'Abaqat ul Anwar, Part 4 P. 370.
2. Surah Nuh, No. 71, verse 26

Section 5: The Ministry of Hud

Surah Hud – Verse 50

وإِلَي عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُوداً قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلاَّ مُفْتَرُونَ

50. "And unto (the people of) 'Ad (We sent) their brother Hud; he said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no god other than He. You are only forgers (of calumnies)'."

Hud (as) succeeded Noah (as) as a prophet. The story of this prophet of Allah is recorded in verses 65 to 72 of the Surah Al-A'raf.

At first, the Qur'an recounts:

"And unto (the people of) 'Ad (We sent) their brother Hud;..."

There is a point worth further clarification here. It provides us with the connotation, 'brother,' in the case of Hud, which reflects the fact that Arabs refer to all the individuals of a tribe as 'brothers'.

Another connotation signifies that the behavior of Hud had been very much like that of a brother in keeping with the other prophets' relationships with their fellow tribesmen. They did not behave as 'emirs', as commanders or as fathers with respect to their children, but they related just like brothers irrespective of every privilege and superiority.

Hud's first call was like that of all the other prophets, it was the call to monotheism and the negation of idol worship in all its respects. Hud called inviting them to worship Allah since there is no other worth worshipping except Him.

The verse says:

"...he said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no god other than He..."

He told them that in worshipping the idols and believing in them, they were wrong. They only attributed falsity to Allah and claimed that those idols were His partners.

The verse continues saying:

"...You are only forgers (of calumnies)'."

These idols should neither have been considered His partners nor could they have been sources of good or evil. They were of no use. No false accusation could have been more humiliating than

considering such worthless things as significant!

Surah Hud – Verse 51

يَاقَوْمِ لاَ أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْراً إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلاَّ عَلَي الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

51. "(Hud said) 'O' my people! I ask you no reward for it. My reward is only upon Him Who created me. Have you then no sense?"

Hud (as) declared to his people that he did not expect any compensation for his call from them. He did not demand any rewards from them so that they might think that his appeals and his supplications were for the acquisition of wealth and position or whatever else.

It declares:

"(Hud said) 'O' my people! I ask you no reward for it. My reward is only upon Him Who created me. Have you then no sense?"

The only compensation and reward for me is from Him Who has created me.

He Who has bestowed upon me my soul and my body, and to Whom I owe everything; that is my Creator and it is He Who provides for my needs.

In principle, if I take any steps in the direction of your guidance and happiness, it is for the sake of being obedient to His commandments and therefore I expect Him to provide me with my sustenance, not you.

Surah Hud – Verse 52

وَيَاقَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَآءَ عَلَيْكُم مِدْرَاراً وَيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً إِلَي قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِينَ

52. "And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn unto Him repentant. He will send you the sky pouring abundant rain, increasing you strength unto your strength; and do not you turn back (from the Truth) as sinners."

Eventually, to encourage them and utilize all possible means of awakening the truth – seeking spirit of this misled people, he takes recourse to offering those material rewards that are conditional upon faith which Allah makes available to the faithful in this world; Hud said to his people to ask the Lord for forgiveness for having committed sins, thus repenting and returning to Him.

The verse says:

“And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn unto Him repentant...”

By doing so, (you will notice that) He will order the skies to provide you with enlivening rain in on a regular basis.

The verse continues saying:

“...He will send you the sky pouring abundant rain...”

He will do all this so that your cultivated lands and your gardens would not fall into the grip of drought and would always remain green. Moreover because of your faith, virtue, abstinence from sin and returning to Him, your power would be increased.

The verse says:

“...increasing you strength unto your strength; and do not you turn back (***from the Truth***) ***as sinners.”***

Imam Hasan (as) has been quoted as saying that he once went to Mu‘awiyah. On his return, one of Mu‘awiyah’s gatemen told him that he had a great deal of wealth but he could not father a son. Then he asked the Imam to instruct him in a prayer so that He might enable him to have a child.

The Imam (as) answered:

“Make repentance one of your primary goals.”

That man repented over and over again, sometimes repenting seven hundred times a day. Then Allah bestowed upon him a son. On hearing the news, Mu‘awiyah asked the man why he had not asked the Imam as to why repentance carries such a tremendous influence. The next time he encountered the Imam, he thus made this query to which the Imam (as) responded:

“Have you not heard that Allah says in the story of Hud:

“...and increasing strength upon your strength...””

The Qur’anic term /quwwah/ has been interpreted as property (wealth), children, and energy. In the story of Noah, verse 12, the Qur’an implies that if you repent and apologize, He will add to your prestige with children and property.

One should not think that faith in Allah and focusing on Him signifies distancing oneself from wealth and property.

Were we to accept the faith, not only we would not lose anything, but also our wealth and property will be multiplied. If the Islamic state aspires towards economic expansion, it must seek a strategy for

expanding the spiritual state of its society.

At any rate, turning away from the prophets and neglecting them is a grave sin.

Surah Hud – Verse 53

قَالُوا يَا هُودُ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِي ءَالِهَتِنَا عَن قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

53. "They said: 'O Hud! You have brought us no clear proof, and we shall not abandon our gods for your word, nor are we believers in you!'"

Those who worship idols of stone and wood, and offer no solid reasons for their deeds, question the prophets whose way of life is to prove the truth of their claims by performing miracles and offering clear evidence.

Disbelievers' main response was that they would not abandon their idols for the sake of Hud's words. They did not mention anything regarding lack of evidence as they were not after reasoning.

They reiterated:

"They said: 'O Hud! You have brought us no clear proof, and we shall not abandon our gods for your word, nor are we believers in you!'"

The prophets met with fierce resistance from the idol worshippers in the first stage of their call, but they never neglected their duty in propagating Allah's message.

Surah Hud – Verse 54

إِن نَقُولُ إِلاَّ اعْتَرَاكَ بَعْضُ ءَالِهَتِنَا بِسُوءٍ قَالَ إِنِّي أُشْهِدُ اللَّهَ وَاشْهَدُوا أَنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ

54. "We say nothing but that some of our gods have smitten you with evil. He said: 'Verily I call Allah to witness and bear you (also) witness that I am quit of what you associate (with Allah)."

The Arabic term /'i'tira/ means protest and cursing. Ascribing insanity to the prophets, as well as to revolutionaries, and community reformists, who have risen up against superstition, is nothing new.

On the contrary, declaring their distance from and abhorrence of idol-worshipping and idol worshippers has always been in keeping with the spirit of all the Divine prophets which itself provides us with an example confirming that one must stand decisively against superstition.

The verse says:

“We say nothing but that some of our gods have smitten you with evil. He said: ‘Verily I call Allah to witness and bear you (also) witness that I am quit of what you associate (with Allah).”

The resistance and challenging spirit of Hud (as) provides the reason for his legitimacy and the decisiveness of his path. It exhibits the fact that prophets fear Allah only and are not frightened by any other power.

Surah Hud – Verse 55

مِن دُونِهِ فَكِيدُونِي جَميعاً ثُمَّ لا تُنْظِرُونِ

55. “Besides Him, (I am quit of everything you worship), therefore, scheme (your worst) against me, all together, and give me no respite.”

Hud further goes on to say that not only they are unable to be of any use to you, but also you, with such a large population still lack the power to do anything even with the aid of those whom you worship other than Him.

So I dare all of you to unite and plan any kind of conspiracies you can against me, give me no chances, you cannot do anything against me.

The verse says:

“Besides Him, (I am quit of everything you worship), therefore, scheme (your worst) against me, all together, and give me no respite.”

Surah Hud – Verse 56

إِنّي تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَي اللَّهِ رَبّي وَرَبّكُم مَا مِن دَآبَّةٍ إِلاَّ هُوَ ءَاخِذُ بِنَاصِيَتِهَآ إِنَّ رَبّي عَلَي صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

56. “Verily, I have put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord! (For) there is no moving creature but He holds it (in His control) by its forelock. Verily my Lord is on a Straight Path.”

By relying on Allah, one can stand up against the entire world, for Allah is in full command of everything and besides being All-Powerful, He is also Just. Therefore one must rely on him who, besides having power, is just, too; such as Allah, the prophet and immaculate Imams.

The verse says:

“Verily, I have put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord! (For) there is no moving creature but

He holds it (in His control) by its forelock. Verily my Lord is on a Straight Path."

One can speak of Divine anger and the Divine system of justice being at work when the issue involved is the enmity and obstinacy of the idol worshippers, so that they may be transformed and become believers.

Surah Hud – Verse 57

فإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُم مَآ أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ إِلَيْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفُ رَبّي قَوْماً غَيْرَكُمْ وَلا تَضُرُّونَهُ شَيْئاً إِنَّ رَبّي عَلَي كُلّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيظٌ

57. "But if you turn away (from my call), I have conveyed the Message with which I was sent to you and my Lord will make another People to succeed you, and you will not harm Him in the least. Verily my Lord is Guardian over everything."

Eventually, Hud's last words to them are as that is they turn away from the Right Path, it is not he who will be at a loss as he has completed his mission which is conveying Allah's message.

The verse says:

"But if you turn away (from my call), I have conveyed the Message with which I was sent to you..."

He means that they should not think that if his call had not been well received it would be a defeat for him. No, he completed his mission, and thus he had been the successful.

Then he warns them of the Divine punishment as the idol worshippers were threatened, saying that if they do not heed Allah's call, the Lord will soon exterminate them, replacing them with another people, and He will not suffer any loss.

The verse says:

"...and my Lord will make another People to succeed you, and you will not harm Him in the least..."

This is the law of creation, which is, if a nation is not eligible to receive Allah's blessings, it will be removed and will be replaced by another more deserving nation.

Also, they should beware, that Allah is the Guardian of everything and keeps a record of all accounts. He never misses a chance, He never forgets nor does He leave the prophets and His friends in the sea of oblivion. On the contrary, He is aware of everything and is in full command.

The verse says:

“...Verily my Lord is Guardian over everything.”

Surah Hud – Verse 58

وَلَمَّا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا هُوداً وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَنَجَّيْنَاهُم مِنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ

58. “And when Our decree came, We saved Hud and those who believed with him, by a Mercy from Us and delivered them from a harsh chastisement.”

Just as inflicting punishment takes place according to Allah’s decree, being rescued from it also is in His hands and the prophets and their companions are exempt from Allah’s penalty, because they obey His guidance.

The verse says:

“And when Our decree came, We saved Hud and those who believed with him, by a Mercy from Us and delivered them from a harsh chastisement.”

Merely having faith in the prophets is not enough, following them and supporting them is also necessary.

We must also take note that the main source of all blessings is He, but His anger, estrangement and outrage have their roots in our conduct.

Surah Hud – Verse 59

وَتِلْكَ عَادٌ جَحَدُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَصَوْا رُسُلَهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ كُلِّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيد

59. “And this was (the people of) ‘Ad; they rejected the Signs of their Lord, and disobeyed His Messengers, and followed the command of every obstinate tyrant.”

He summarizes the sins of the ‘Ad into three areas in this verse. First, He says the people of ‘Ad denied the Signs of their Lord obstinately, denying every sign sent as evidence of the authenticity of their prophet.

The verse says:

“And this was (the people of) ‘Ad; they rejected the Signs of their Lord…”

Secondly, they opposed the prophets, with a roguish behavior and in an unruly manner. The verse continues:

"...and disobeyed His Messengers..."

Thirdly, they abandoned Allah's decree and followed the order of any despot instead.

"...and followed the command of every obstinate tyrant."

What a greater sin can be found that they abandoned faith, opposed their prophets and followed the obstinate tyrants.

The Arabic word /jabbar/ is a term used to denote a person who furiously strikes, kills, and destroys and does not follow the rule of reason. And the term /'anid/ refers to someone who is extraordinarily hostile towards the truth and never acknowledges it.

These two characteristics describe the profiles of despots and tyrants who, in every epoch, are noted for never lending their ears to the truth, and whenever they face an opponent they mercilessly torture and eradicate him.

Surah Hud – Verse 60

وَأُتْبِعُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَلآ إِنَّ عَاداً كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ أَلاَ بُعْداً لِعَادٍ قَوْمِ هُودٍ

60. "And they were pursued by a curse in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection. Behold! the 'Ad disbelieved in their Lord: so away with 'Ad, the people of Hud."

In this verse which ends the story of Hud and the tribe of 'Ad, the Qur'an explains the consequences of their evil acts and falsehood saying that they were damned and cursed in this world for their evil deeds and were made infamous with a notorious history after their death.

The verse says:

"And they were pursued by a curse in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection. Behold! the 'Ad disbelieved in their Lord:..."

It will be said on the Day of Resurrection:

"*Let it be known on the Day of Resurrection that the people of 'Ad refused to recognize their Lord and lost His favor upon them.*"

Although the term 'Ad is adequate for describing and introducing these people, the phrase "***the people of Hud***" has also been mentioned in the above verse which emphasizes and makes allusion to the fact that this group of people is the same one which annoyed their compassionate prophet so much and hence, distanced themselves from Allah's favor.

The verse continues saying:

"...so away with 'Ad, the people of Hud."

Verses number 50 to 60 of this Surah relate to the people of 'Ad. They were of the Arab race and resided in the Jazirat ul Arab or the Arabian Peninsula, but the name of this group of people is not mentioned in the present Torah.

They were a people who enjoyed a high standard of living and lived in the magnificent towns according to the suras Al-Qamar, Al Haqqa, Al-A'raf, Al-Sajdah, and Ash-Shu'ara those people were tall, vigorous and had a unique civilization.

As far as their system of belief was concerned, they worshipped idols and followed tyrants. Hud invited them to worship the One and only God, and become monotheist. However, they did not submit and met their doom with Allah's anger which was manifested in the form of furious, burning storms.

The people of 'Ad consisted of two groups; the first 'Ad and the second 'Ad. The latter used to live in Ahqaf (a region in the Hijaz) or in the Yemen until seven hundred B.C.

Section 6: The Ministry of Salih

Surah Hud – Verse 61

وإِلَي ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحاً قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنشَأَكُم مِنَ الاَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ

61. "And unto (the people of) Thamud (We sent) their brother Salih, He said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no god other than He. It is He Who produced you from the earth and settled you therein: so ask forgiveness of Him, and turn unto Him in repentance: surely my Lord is Nigh, Responsive'."

Salih (as) is the third prophet who succeeds Noah and Hud (as) in the Divine mission.

The Qur'anic story of the people of 'Ad ended with all of its instructive lessons and now it is the turn of the people of Thamud, the people, who, according to historical narrations, lived then in the land of "Wadi al Qurra" which was located between Medina and Damascus.

Here again we note that the Qur'an, when mentioning their prophet, terms Salih as a brother, a

compassionate person who had no other aim except wishing his people well.

The noble verse says:

"And unto (the people of) Thamud (We sent) their brother Salih…"

The verse also continues:

"…He said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no god other than He…"

Afterwards, in order to elevate their sense of appreciation and their sense of gratitude, he refers to an example of Allah's favor which, from the point of view of their existence itself, they would not able to deny, he says:

"…It is He Who produced you from the earth…"

After referring to the blessings of creation, the verse reminds them of all the favors which Allah had bestowed upon them in being enriched in the earth, and implies that Allah is He who has left the development of the earth to you and has empowered you with the means of its exploitation.

The verse says:

"…and settled you therein:…"

It is to be noted here that the Qur'an does not claim that Allah developed the earth and made it available to them, on the contrary, it says that He left the development of the earth to them. Allusion is here made to the fact that all the means of exploitation had been readily available from all points of view, however, it is up to men to develop the land with their own toil, and obtain its resources.

And they would not be able to claim any share of it without working and making the required effort.

Since such is the case, they should seek repentance from their sins and return to Him for Allah is always near to His subjects and accepts their requests.

The verse concludes:

"…so ask forgiveness of Him, and turn unto Him in repentance: surely my Lord is Nigh, Responsive'."

Surah Hud – Verse 62

قَالُوا يَا صَالِحُ قَدْ كُنتَ فِينَا مَرْجُوّاً قَبْلَ هَذَآ أَتَنْهَانَآ أَن نَعْبُدَ مَا يَعْبُدُ ءَابَآؤُنَا وَإِنَّنَا لَفِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَآ إِلَيْه مُرِيبٍ

62. “They said: ‘O Salih! You have hitherto been a source of hope among us. Do you (now) forbid us to worship what our fathers worshipped? Truly we are in disquieting doubt as to that unto which you invite us’.”

The idol worshippers told Salih (as) that before he used to be their source of hope and pride and because of this they loved him. They said this so that he might be encouraged to try to preserve the good relationship they used to have, and give up his calling to them towards monotheism.

They told him that he was their source of hope in the past and they used to appeal to him asking his counsel, they used to have faith in his wisdom, insight, and in his intelligence, and they never cast any shadow of a doubt upon his benevolence and compassion.

However, they told him that unfortunately, you made us lose hope in you with your opposition against our way of life which is the worship of idols and icons according to the way of our ancestors.

This has been our source of pride and thus indicates that you do not have the slightest respect for our leaders, nor do you have any faith in our wisdom and intelligence nor do you defend our traditions.

The verse says:

“They said: ‘O Salih! You have hitherto been a source of hope among us...”

Do you actually want to dissuade us from worshipping what our fathers used to worship?

They declared:

“...Do you (now) forbid us to worship what our fathers worshipped?...”

The fact of the matter is that we are in doubt as to the way of life to which you are calling us (that is monotheism) and, at the same time, we are also pessimistic about it.

They said:

“...Truly we are in disquieting doubt as to that unto which you invite us’.”

Surah Hud – Verse 63

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنتُ عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِن رَبِّي وَءَاتَانِي مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً فَمَن يَنْصُرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ عَصَيْتُهُ فَمَا تَزِيدُونَنِي غَيْرَ تَخْسِيرٍ

63. “He (Salih) said: ‘O’ my people! Bethink you if I be upon a clear proof from my Lord and He hath sent Mercy unto me from Himself, who will then help me against Allah if I (were to) disobey Him? So you do not add to me other than loss.”

Metaphysically orientated religions and Divinely appointed prophets call on people to adopt monotheism and the worship of Allah by providing sound reasoning and miracles, and not by force, threats and ignorance.

The position of being appointed as a prophet is a special favor and a privilege accorded to certain individuals by Allah.

One should never abandon Allah's way by imaginary and wishful thinking about popular support. We should take note of the fact that deviant people will add nothing to others except to their losses, for opposing truth itself is something very detrimental for man.

The verse says:

"He (Salih) said: 'O' my people! Bethink you if I be upon a clear proof from my Lord and He hath sent Mercy unto me from Himself, who will then help me against Allah if I (were to) disobey Him? So you do not add to me other than loss."

Surah Hud – Verse 64

وَيَا قَوْمِ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ ءَايَةً فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلا تَمَسُّوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيبٌ

64. "O my People! This she – camel of Allah is a Sign for you. So leave her alone to graze in Allah's earth, and do not touch her with any harm, lest a swift chastisement will seize you!"

The story of Salih's she-camel has also been reiterated in suras Ash-Shu'ara and Al-Qamar as well.[1]

Salih (as) said to the people that he would ask their idols something and they also should ask something from His Lord. Whoever, provides the right answer, could be the object of his and their worship. The idol worshippers accepted and their request was for a pregnant she-camel to come out of the mountain just then and there. Allah accepted their request and a camel, meeting all those requirements, came out of the mountain.

This she-camel of Salih was extraordinary in many respects.

1. It came out of the innermost part of the mountain.

2. It was pregnant without having any contact with a male camel.

3. For one full day, she had drunk of the water of that village.

4. It provided a daily supply of milk that was sufficient for meeting the needs of the people of the area.

5. The people had no responsibilities towards her.

6. It served as a reason and as a miracle which was quite tangible and understandable for the people.

Surah Hud – Verse 65

فَعَقَرُوهَا فَقَالَ تَمَتَّعُوا فِي دَارِكُمْ ثَلاَثَةَ أَيَّامٍ ذَلِكَ وَعْدٌ غَيْرُ مَكْذُوبٍ

65. "So they hamstrung her. Then he said: 'Enjoy yourselves in your abode for three days, (***then will be your ruin***)***. That is a promise not to be belied.'"***

Through traditional narrations we are informed that only one person had killed the she-camel. Despite this, the Qur'an says: /'aqaruha/ which means that all of them killed her. This indication signifies that there had been a consensus of opinion among them about the killing.

From the Islamic point of view, the ideological bond between individuals causes them to be responsible for the sins of single individuals within the context of that ideology.

Question: What is the underlying philosophy of a three-day grace period?

Firstly: So as to give them a chance to repent.

Secondly: To provide a means for spiritual pressure and augmentation of the penalty. If a person is told that he will be killed within three days, this very news will serve as the greatest blow upon him psychologically speaking.

Thirdly: It provided another good proof for the legitimacy of the Divine prophet since fixing a dead line results from having access to news from the invisible world.

However, one should never take Divine warnings as jokes or lies as scorning them will cause the infliction of Divine penalties.

Surah Hud – Verse 66

فَلَمَّا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا صَالِحاً وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَمِنْ خِزْيِ يَوْمِئِذٍ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ

66. "And when Our Decree came (***to pass***)***, We saved Salih and those who believed with him by a Mercy from Us, and*** (***delivered them***) ***from the ignominy of that day. Verily, your Lord is the All-strong, the All-mighty."***

The Arabic term /xizy/, applied in this holy verse, means a kind of defect of deformity, the appearance of which causes man embarrassment and loss of prestige.

Natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, floods or dangerous epidemics may happen to both to the faithful as well as to idol worshippers, just like carelessness, which may be seen in one man, but the effects of which can be felt by all.

However, when the issue in question is the Divine punishment, the faithful are secure and safe unless they have merited punishment owing to their lack of action, their condescension to oppression, or their ceasing to dissuade others from what has been forbidden.

The verse says:

"And when Our Decree came (*to pass*)***, We saved Salih and those who believed with him by a Mercy from Us, and*** (*delivered them*) ***from the ignominy of that day. Verily, your Lord is the All-strong, the All-mighty."***

Surah Hud – Verse 67 - 68

وَأَخَذَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ

كَأَن لَمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيهَآ أَلآ إِنَّ ثَمُودَ كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ أَلاَ بُعْداً لِثَمُودَ

67. "And the (*mighty*) ***Blast overtook those who were unjust, so they became motionless corpses in their abodes."***
68. "As if they had never dwelt there. Behold! Verily Thamud rejected their Lord. Behold! away with Thamud!"

The Arabic term, /jaimin/ is derived from /jaama/ which means sitting on one's knees or falling on face, like the state in which one has received an electric shock which renders one immobile, making that person lose the power to escape.

The Qur'anic term /yaqnau/ is derived from /qiniy/ which means staying in one place.

The record of these obstinate and oppressive people of Thamud comes to a close in this verse.

Salih (as) is one of the Arab prophets, and the tribe of Thamud is an ancient tribe belonging to prehistoric period, which resided in Wadi-al-Qura, located between Medina and Damascus. They were a nation of farmers and used to engage in horticulture. The name of Salih has been mentioned in the Books of the Divine prophets.

The annihilation of the people of Salih by the mighty blast has been likened to and resembles that of the supersonic jets of today which break the sound barrier when their speed exceeds that of sound.

The terrifying sound caused, shatters glass windows, can cause abortions in pregnant women, and hasten heart attacks. As a result of the mighty blast, the Thamud people also were annihilated. The verse says:

"And the** (**mighty**) **Blast overtook those who were unjust, so they became motionless corpses in their abodes."

The end of time will also be associated with a Divine mighty blast which will exterminate everything. Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 49 says:

"They will not have to wait for anything but a single Blast: it will seize them while they are yet disputing** (**among themselves**)**."

Again, Surah Yasin, No. 36, verses 29, 32, say:

"It was naught but a single** (**mighty**) **Blast, and behold! They were** (**like ashes**) **quenched and silent."

"And all of them shall surely be brought before Us."

The raising up of the dead on the Day of Resurrection will also be made manifest in the same way.

However, the Divine punishment inflicted upon the oppressors takes a similar course as a result of their injustice and cruelty. It must be noted that Allah's retributions are not given only in the Hereafter, but injustice and cruelty will be rewarded even in this very world, too.

The verse says:

"As if they had never dwelt there. Behold! Verily Thamud rejected their Lord. Behold! away with Thamud!"

1. Surah Ash-Shu'ara No. 26, verses 155–158, and Surah Al-Qamar No. 54, verses 27–31.

Section 7: Ministry of Lot

Surah Hud – Verse 69

وَلَقَدْ جَآءَتْ رُسُلُنَآ إِبْرَاهِيَم بِالْبُشْرَي قَالُوا سَلاَماً قَالَ سَلاَمٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ أَن جَآءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيذٍ

69. "And certainly Our messengers (the angels) came to Abraham with glad tidings. They said 'Peace!' He answered 'Peace!' and he did not delay to bring a roasted calf."

Now is time to focus on one of the highlights of the life of Abraham, the iconoclastic champion. Of course, only that part of his story, which deals with the story of the people of Lot and punishment of this unruly people is being discussed here.

The Qur'an says that Allah's messengers (angels) came to Abraham, bearing good tidings, though they had come to deliver a message to Abraham (as) before.

The verse says:

"And certainly Our messengers (the angels) came to Abraham with glad tidings..."

There are two hypotheses incompatible with each other, as to what message those angels were carrying:

First; the message relates to tidings regarding the birth of Ismail and Isaac which were great good tidings for him.

Secondly, Abraham, who was tired of the unruliness and corruption of the people of Lot, became happy on hearing of the mission of the angels to destroy them.

When the messengers arrived they gave him the greetings of 'Peace' and he answered them likewise. Before long he had brought them a roasted calf.

The verse says:

"...They said 'Peace!' He answered 'Peace!' and he did not delay to bring a roasted calf."

The inference drawn from the sentence is that one of the rules of hosting a guest is that a meal should be prepared for him at the earliest possible time, after his arrival, for he can be both tired and hungry, especially when he is a traveler.

Surah Hud – Verse 70

فَلَمَّا رَءَآ أَيْدِيَهُمْ لاَ تَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ نَكِرَهُمْ وَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لا تَخَفْ إِنَّآ أُرْسِلْنَآ إِلَي قَوْمِ لُوطٍ

70. "But when he saw their hands extended not towards it, he mistrusted them, and conceived a fear of them. They said: 'Fear not; we have been sent against the people of Lot'."

Abraham's (as) fear is different from the kind of fear and weakness found in ordinary men when facing problematic situations, for he was the archetypical iconoclast in history who was never afraid of anything.

Nevertheless focusing one's attention on possible dangers and on being a possible target is another matter.

The verse says:

"But when he saw their hands extended not towards it, he mistrusted them, and conceived a fear of them. They said: 'Fear not; we have been sent against the people of Lot'."

At any rate, since Lot (as) and his tribe was one of the groups under Abraham's command, he had to be briefed before their annihilation.

Surah Hud – Verse 71

وَامْرَأَتُهُ قَآئِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ فَبَشَّرْنَاهَا بِإِسْحَاقَ وَمِن وَرَآءِ إِسْحَاقَ يَعْقُوبَ

71. "And his wife was standing (by) and she laughed when We gave her the glad tidings (of the birth) of Isaac, and after Isaac, of Jacob."

There are several possibilities mentioned as to the reasons for the standing by of Abraham's wife; when the verse says:

"And his wife was standing (by) and she laughed when We gave her the glad tidings (of the birth) of Isaac, and after Isaac, of Jacob."

a– for worshipping

b– for serving the guests

c– for witnessing the comings and goings of individuals and the discussions.

Her laughter was either because she understood that their abstinence from eating was not a sign of danger for Abraham, or, as has been pointed out in some commentaries, Sarah, Abraham's wife, was an elderly woman who had long passed her child bearing days when she suddenly heard this unbelievable news.

However, while in this mood, she realized that the Divine Will was that she would have a child.

However, each group of the Divine angels were commissioned to accomplish a particular affair. These group of angels followed two objectives. One of which was the extermination of the corrupt people of Lot, and the other was to give the good tidings of a child to be bestowed upon Abraham (as) and Sarah.

Surah Hud – Verse 72

قَالَتْ يَا وَيْلَتَي ءَأَلِدُ وَأَنَاْ عَجُوزٌ وَهَذَا بَعْلِي شَيْخاً إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ

72. "She said: 'Voe is me! Shall I bear a child when I am an old woman, and this my husband is an old man? Verily this is a wonderful thing!'"

Sarah, who had given up hope of having children, with a tone of tremendous wonder, exclaimed implying that alas for her. Might she give birth to a child despite her old age and despite the fact that her husband too was old? That was a truly amazing matter.

The verse itself says:

"She said: 'Voe is me! Shall I bear a child when I am an old woman, and this my husband is an old man? Verily this is a wonderful thing!'"

That same Allah Who had made the fire cold for Abraham (as) and had made him win over the idol-worshippers, is definitely able to make an infertile old woman fertile and an old man sire a child.

Surah Hud – Verse 73

قَالُوا أَتَعْجَبِينَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ إِنَّهُ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ

73. "They said: "Do you wonder at Allah's decree? The grace of Allah and His blessings on you, O people of the House! Verily He is Praise worthy, Glorious. "

One day, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) gave greetings to a group of people which returned his greetings, saying:

"*Our greetings to you and may Allah's favor and blessings be with you, the Ahl-ul-Bayt, and may His forgiveness and His paradise also be upon you as well*."

Ali (as) said:

"*Do not add anything to what the angels said to Abraham* (*as*), *therefore, the phrase 'And may Allah's favour and blessings be with you' would suffice.*"

The verse says:

"They said: "Do you wonder at Allah's decree? The grace of Allah and His blessings on you, O people of the House! Verily He is Praise worthy, Glorious. "

Question: Considering the fact that in the above verse, the angels addressed Abraham's wife using the phrase Ahl-ul-Bayt, and since, naturally, everyone's wife is considered as part of one's household, why is it then that in the verse of Tathir in the Surah Al Ahzab, No. 33, verse 33,[1] the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (S) are not included in his household?

Answer: Regarding only the literal meaning of the word, it would be natural for the word Ahl-ul-Bayt to include reference to one's wife.

However, we have firm grounds regarding the fact that someone can be excluded from this denotation even when normally they would be included in its purview, like in the verse saying: "*Verily he is not of your household*"[2] where Noah's son is not counted as a member in Noah's household.

Sometimes it also happens that there could be a reason to include someone who would normally not be considered as a member of the household, as has been said of Salman:

"Salman belongs to our household (Ahl-ul-Bayt)"

There are numerous narrations concerning the verse of Tathir which say that the blessed Prophet (S) had taken certain people under his cloak calling them his Ahl-ul-Bayt, while he did not allow his wife, the pious Umm-us-Salamah, to enter.

This Divine favor and blessings were not confined to that time and place. It has continued in this family, too. What Divine blessing can be superior to that bestowed upon the Prophet (S) and the Immaculate Imams (as) who have emerged from this household?

Surah Hud – Verse 74

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الرَّوْعُ وَجَآءَتْهُ الْبُشْرَي يُجَادِلُنَا فِي قَوْمِ لُوطٍ

74. "So when fear had passed from Abraham and the glad tidings reached him, he began disputing with Us concerning the people of Lot."

Perhaps Abraham's (as) plea is the same one mentioned in Surah 'Ankabut, No. 29, verse 31, where, in addressing the angels, he asked how they would overturn the land when Lot (as) still remained among them.

They answered that they were well aware of their status, so they would save Lot and his followers. The verse says:

"So when fear had passed from Abraham and the glad tidings reached him, he began disputing with Us concerning the people of Lot."

The angels removed his anxiety and in directly addressing Sarah they reinforced the good tidings of them being graced with progeny. Concern and anxiety in the face of possible danger are safety-orientated issues while having children has an emotional dimension. Safety issues relate to society as a whole and children are related to the household.

Surah Hud – Verses 75 - 76

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ

يَآ إِبْرَاهِيمُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَآ إِنَّهُ قَدْ جَآءَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ وَإِنَّهُمْ ءَاتِيهِمْ عَذَابٌ غَيْرُ مَرْدُودٍ

75. "Verily Abraham was indeed for bearing, tender-hearted, penitent."
76. "O Abraham! Forsake this! Indeed the decree of your Lord has come to pass and surely there is coming (***upon***) ***them an irreversible chastisement."***

Patience is a highly praised characteristic that enables someone to forbear any infliction in times of crisis and not try to avenge it. This is why Abraham wished to haply remove the punishment from the people of Lot.

This good quality is very prominent in prophets, godly benevolent authorities, and knowledgeable people, for were it not to exist, they would not be able to tolerate the difficulties and troubles of their people, and therefore, they would not be able to achieve their objectives which would include guidance.

The Qur'anic term /'awwah/ means supplication and humility before Allah, along with crying and weeping.

The verse says:

"Verily Abraham was indeed for bearing, tender-hearted, penitent."

Here, Abraham shows compassion for the people of Lot, who are rather inextricably entangled with having to suffer this awesome penalty.

The Qur'anic term /munib/, mentioned in the first verse, denotes repentance and returning, and at the same time concentrating on Allah, for Abraham appealed to Him to forgive and not to condemn the people of Lot.

However, Allah, the Blissful and Glorious, is so perfectly patient, forgiving, indulgent and compassionate that His servants can not even remotely conceive its extent. The crucial determining factor in all this, however, is that it all depends upon the suitability of the servant in point, which, when lacking in

suitability sparing them is of no avail.

Once the limits are exceeded, the mercy changes to rigor and this must be so of necessity, for mercy from the point of view of the sharp teeth that Allah gave to a panther is the other side of oppression from the point of view of the sheep in its jaws.

The people of Lot had no more potential to be guided, and if they were left to continue, their evil acts would have permeated other spheres as well, just like a corrupt organ which, if not excised, would affect other organs, thus spreading the infection further. Therefore, in response, the angels said:

“O Abraham! Forsake this! Indeed the decree of your Lord has come to pass and surely there is coming* (*upon*) *them an irreversible chastisement.”

At that point Abraham realized that there was no more room for mercy, he gave up pleading for them and the angels of death went forth to do their work executing the Divine order and exterminating the people of Lot.

Surah Hud – Verse 77

وَلَمَّا جَآءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطاً سِيءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعاً وَقَالَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيبٌ

77. “And when Our messengers* (*the angels*) *came to Lot, he was grieved for them and felt straitened to protect them. He said: ‘This is a distressful day’.”

When the angels came, Lot was engaged in farming outside the town. He noticed some handsome, well-dressed young men arrived. He became afraid that his people might take to them when they entered the town.

He thought that it would be best to invite them to his house, which he did, and his invitation was accepted. As he was taking them home, he was worried that his people might pass by and notice them. He wanted them to go back where they came from, saying:

“*You should know that you are going to a despicable and evil people*”.

At this point, Gabriel said:

“*That’s one*”.

The reason why Gabriel said this was that Allah had told the angels that they should not hasten to destroy the people of Lot until Lot himself had testified to their evil three times. As they kept on going, for the second time Lot told them:

“*Really, you are going towards an evil people.*”

Gabriel this time said:

“That’s the second time”.

As Lot arrived at the gate of the town, he said for the third time:

“You are going among an evil people from among Allah’s creatures.”

Gabriel said:

“That’s the third time”.

Lot entered the town followed by his guests. One by one they entered the house, and when Lot’s wife noticed their handsomeness she wanted to call the people and tell them about it. She climbed up on the roof of the house and lit a fire. When the evil people of the town came, she told them that there were some very handsome young men in the house.

Lot was at his wits end trying to find a way to get rid of these people, to save his guests from being the objects of their evil intentions and to protect his honor. He was having a hard time, because he was in a quandary as to what he should do. He murmured:

“This is a very difficult day.”

On the one hand, how could he protect his guests from the wretchedness and evil of those people? On the other hand, how could he eradicate the evil that they had caused? And finally, what should he do about the spy on the inside, his wife, who was willing to reveal anything secret in his house to the enemy outside?

As the Qur’an says:

“Allah sets forth an example to the Unbelievers, the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were under two of Our righteous servants, but they acted treacherously towards them so they availed them nothing before Allah on their account, but were told: ‘Enter you both the Fire along with (***others***) ***that enter!’”***[3]

Surah Hud – Verse 78

وَجَآءَهُ قَوْمُهُ يُهْرَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ وَمِن قَبْلُ كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ هَؤُلآءِ بَنَاتِي هُنَّ أَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلاتُخْزُونِ
فِي ضَيْفِي أَلَيْسَ مِنكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَشِيدٌ

78. “And his people came rushing towards him, And aforetime they had been practicing

abominations. He said: 'O my people, here are my daughters they are purer for you. So fear Allah, and do no degrade me with my guests! Is there not among you one upright man?'"

The Arabic term /yuhra'un/ derived from /'ihra'/ means intensive driving. That is, the uninhibited passion of this rebellious people goaded them on towards Lot's (as) guests.

The meaning of the term /at-har/, in this verse, is not that sodomy has something pure about it but that marriage is purer. It means that for the sinner who is pursuing the gratification his sexual instincts, it is preferable to get married than to commit sin.

It is worthy to note that one's potentialities can flourish when caught in the midst of anxieties and difficulties. If the Divine angels would have introduced themselves to Lot (as) on their arrival, there would have been no need for moaning, sighing, crying for help and appealing to the emotions of the public, nor would there have been any need to offer a marriage proposal.

The verse says:

"And his people came rushing towards him, And aforetime they had been practicing abominations. He said: 'O my people, here are my daughters they are purer for you. So fear Allah, and do no degrade me with my guests! Is there not among you one upright man?'"

Question: Why would a prophet propose his daughter for marriage to an unbelieving idol worshipper?

Answer: Perhaps he might suggest that conversion be a condition for the marriage so that the marriage could facilitate and strengthen the belief in Allah.

Maybe the meaning of the term /banati'/ is 'people's daughters' as the prophet is considered the father of the nation and is speaking on their behalf. Or maybe, at that time, such marriages were common for the sake of convenience and expediency.

Explanations

1-Sometimes the norms of human society degenerate to such an extent that people hasten towards committing sins being seduced by their unruly lower selves.

2- To prevent people from doing what is forbidden, we must at first open up and show the true path to them so that they do not seek pleasure by committing sins.

3- The meaning of the term 'chastity' is not isolation. On the contrary, it means purity in normal social intercourse.

4- Marriage is the sole and only correct context for sexual gratification, other methods are unclean and sinful.

5- Considering sin as a commonplace matter does not exempt man from his responsibility in dissuading others from performing forbidden acts.

6- Showing hospitality is such an important matter that the noblest of men have tolerated a tremendous degree of suffering for its sake.

7- Homosexuality has been forbidden, considered abominable, and has been rejected in previous religions and is incompatible with one's manliness, development and chastity.

Surah Hud – Verses 79 - 80

قَالُوا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَالَنَا فِي بَنَاتِكَ مِنْ حَقٍّ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيدُ

قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ ءَاوِي إِلَي رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ

79. "They said: 'You know we have no right to your daughters, and verily you know well what we desire'."
80. "He said: 'Would that I had the power against you or I might take refuge in a strong support'."

One's deviation from the right path leads man to the point where he considers the forbidden act of sodomy as a correct and virtuous act and the religiously acceptable act of marriage as a vice and as wrong conduct.

In other words, man is transformed as a consequence of sin, where the most natural way for him may seem to be the ugliest and the most vicious way becomes the most attractive.

The verse, concerning the people of Lot, says:

"They said: 'You know we have no right to your daughters, and verily you know well what we desire'."

In our holy religion, homosexuality is considered as one of the capital sins that require religious punishment. It consists of lashes, execution or both commensurate with the act, and is to be applied upon those who have committed the act according to the testimony of just witnesses.

Muslim leaders and those in positions of responsibility must prevent it by all means. This is why Lot (as) says that if he had faithful companions, he would have fought against those mean people, to defend his guests, or at least he would have taken them to a safe place to shelter them.

The verse says:

“He said: ‘Would that I had the power against you or I might take refuge in a strong support’.”

The Sin of Sodomy in the Qur’an and Traditions

There are many accounts in the Glorious Qur’an about the vicious and detestable act of this deviant people, all of which exhibit the magnitude and intensity of the sin. [4]

The Islamic literature highlights the grievous consequences for such behavior revealing how serious a sin it is in the religion of Islam. For example, it is said that if an adolescent commits or is the object of the act of sodomy, Allah’s heavens start trembling and He will not speak to those involved on the Day of Resurrection.

Imam Sadiq (as) has said that if someone can to be stoned to death twice, that person would be he who had committed the act of sodomy. We can also find in another Islamic from Imam Sadiq (as) quoting the Prophet (S) who said:

“He who performs a sexual act with an adolescent, will enter the Day of Judgment in a state of uncleanness, Allah will be outraged, the perpetrator will be deprived of His favor and He will prepare a place in Hell for such a person and what an awful place it is!”

Again he said:

“If a male is involved in sex with another male, Allah’s heavens will tremble.”[5]

Numerous narrations severely denounce transvestites, i.e. men and women who make themselves up to look like the opposite sex which predisposes them to the act of sodomy.

Surah Hud – Verse 81

قَالُوا يَا لُوطُ إِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ لَن يَصِلُوا إِلَيْكَ فَاَسْرِ بِاَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِنَ الَّيْلِ وَلا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنكُمْ أَحَدٌ إِلاَّ امْرَأَتَكَ إِنَّهُ مُصِيبُهَا مَآ أَصَابَهُمْ إِنَّ مَوْعِدَهُمُ الصُّبْحُ أَلَيْسَ الصُّبْحُ بِقَرِيبٍ

81. “They (the guests) said: ‘O Lot! Verily we are messengers of your Lord! Never shall they reach you! So travel with your family in a part of the night, and let none of you look back, but your wife. Surely she shall be smitten by that which smites them. Verily their appointed time is the morning: Is not the morning nigh?’”

The Arabic term /’asri/ is derived from /’isra’/ which means ‘movement by night’.

The phrase /’illamra’ataka/ (but your wife) has been exceptioned, either is derived from /ahlika/ which means: ‘Do move your whole family by night except your wife,’ or it has been exceptioned from /la yaltafit/ meaning that none of them should look behind or pay attention to what was going on behind

them except his wife, who, while leaving with him was worried about those corrupt people and would end up lingering behind and, consequently, became a victim of the Divine punishment.

When the divine angels noticed Lot's anxiety under the tormenting conditions he was in, they unveiled the secret telling him that they were messengers from Allah, that he should stop worrying and know that those people would not be able to bother him any more.

The verse says:

"They (the guests) said: 'O Lot! Verily we are messengers of your Lord! Never shall they reach you !..."

Becoming aware as to who his guests were and what their mission was, provided him with the utmost comfort and ease of mind, he then realized that his time of troubles was about to be over and he would be free from association with the depravity of this vicious and scandalous tribe, the time for rejoicing was at hand.

The guests ordered Lot to take his family that night and leave that land immediately, for good. However, they were told to be careful not to look back. The only person who violated this order was Lot's wife, who, guilty of inclination towards the corrupt ones disregarded the order and was dealt the same punishment as the Sodomites.

The verse says:

"...So travel with your family in a part of the night, and let none of you look back, but your wife. Surely she shall be smitten by that which smites them..."

The angels last words to him were that the time for imposing the penalty will be in the morning. As the last hours of the night approached, they told them to get up and depart from the town as soon as they can, because the morning time was near.

The verse says:

"...Verily their appointed time is the morning: Is not the morning nigh?'"

Surah Hud – Verses 82-83

فَلَمَّا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً مِن سِجّيلٍ مَنْضُود

مُسَوَّمَةً عِندَ رَبّكَ وَمَا هِيَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ بِبَعِيدٍ

82. "When Our command came, We turned it (their township) upside down, and rained on it stones of baked clay, layer on layer."

83. "Marked with your Lord, and it is not far off from the unjust ones."

The Arabic term /sijjil/ means a piece of baked clay which is neither as soft as clay nor as hard as stone.

The Arabic word /mandud/ means one on top of the other in succession. The objective of stones being marked either is that every piece of stone was meant for a particular person, or it means that those stones were different from the ones on the earth.

This holy verse explains the end result of the people of Lot.

The people of Lot used to live during the time of Abraham (a.s), and Lot (as), their prophet, was sent among them to propagate and disseminate the same religion of monotheism. Accompanying Abraham (as) he went to Palestine then to a land called 'Mu'tafikat', where the people used to worship idols and openly sodomize.

Lot (as) started struggling against this corruption and social pathology. The more he struggled, the less he met with success until he was threatened with expulsion if he did not stop preaching.[6] Thereafter the angels of Divine punishment and death came down and after informing Abraham and Lot (as), completed their mission turning the land of this corrupt tribe upside down.

According to verse 13 of the Surah Al-Hijr, a blast occurred and overwhelmed the people of Lot.

Perhaps, it was this horrible blast which turned the region upside down, stones were thrown out from within the earth and fell upon their heads similar to volcanic eruptions and the subsequent explosions which occur.[7]

Explanations

1. The punishment of those who go against human nature is the overturning of their cities and environment.

The verse says:

"When Our command came, We turned it (their township) upside down..."

2. Oppressive people cannot escape Divine punishment as Allah's anger can turn rain into stones and pelt them to death.

The verse says:

"...and rained on it stones of baked clay, layer on layer."

Those nations who have a permissive attitude towards homosexuality such as is found in the West, must expect Allah's punishment and the upturning of the region where this corruption takes place.

The verse says:

"Marked with your Lord, and it is not far off from the unjust ones."

1. It says: "...Verily Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House and to purify you a (thorough) purifying."
2. Surah Hud No. 11, verse 46
3. Surah At-Tahrim, No. 66, verse 10
4. Refer to Surah Al-A'raf, verses 79-80-83, Surah Hud verse 82, Surah Al-'Anbiya verse 74, Surah An-Naml verse 54.
5. Refer to Usul-i-Kafi, Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Bihar ul 'Anwar, Nahj ul Balaqah
6. Surah Ash-Shu'ara, No. 26, verse 167
7. Al-Mizan, the

Section 8: The Ministry of Shu'ayb

Surah Hud – Verse 84

وإِلَي مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْباً قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ وَلا تَنْقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ إِنّي أَرَاكُم بِخَيْرٍ وإِنّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُحِيطٍ

84. "And to (the people of) Madyan (We sent) their brother Shu'ayb. He said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other Allah than He. And do not give short measure and weight. Verily I see you in prosperity and I fear for you the punishment of an all-encompassing Day'."

Madyan whose name today is Ma'an, is a town to the east of the Gulf of 'Aqaba. In the Torah its name is mentioned as Madyan. Its inhabitants were among the descendents of Ismail (as) and they enjoyed good commercial ties with Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine. Some people regard the term 'Madyan' as the name of a tribe that used to live around Mount Sinai.

The types of corruption that were practiced by the different nations mentioned in the Qur'an vary, and this very fact should be of note.

The corruption of the people of Lot had been sexual deviation, and the corruption of the people of Shu'ayb (as) in this case was economic corruption, i.e. use of short weights; weighing less than what they were assumed to sell or measuring less and claiming to deliver the value of the goods exactly as their clients had ordered.

In keeping with the ways of the other prophets (as), this compassionate and brotherly prophet at first called them to believe in monotheism, the Unity of Allah, the most fundamental pillar of religion, exhorting his people to worship the one and only God.

The verse says:

"And to (the people of) Madyan (We sent) their brother Shu'ayb. He said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other Allah than He..."

Then he turned his attention to the economic corruption of the people whose roots were found in the idol worship itself which was prevalent among the people of Madyan at the time. He said that they should not weigh out their goods less than their value by using the wrong scales in their commercial transactions.

The verse says:

"...And do not give short measure and weight..."

This great prophet's words can be interpreted as two reasons for them. At first he seems to be saying that by accepting this advice the gates of commerce will develop, prices will deflate, and peace and tranquility will prevail which will attract Allah's grace upon the community.

It is also possible to interpret this sentence to mean that Shu'ayb sees them having affluence and tremendous wealth; thus, there is no reason for them to infringe upon people's rights, by selling them less goods and charging them the same price.

The second matter is that he also fears their insistence upon idol worship, and abusing Allah's blessings will lead to their punishment on the Day of Judgment.

The verse continues saying:

"...Verily I see you in prosperity and I fear for you the punishment of an all-encompassing Day'."

Surah Hud – Verse 85

وَيَا قَوْمِ أَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَآءَهُمْ وَلا تَعْثَوْا فِي الأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

85. "And O my people! Fill up the measure and the balance in justice, and do not diminish the people their things: and do not mischief in the land, working corruption."

The Qur'anic phrase /la tabxasu/ is derived from the article /baxasa/ signifying 'not to reduce'; while the Arabic phrase /la ta'au/ means 'not to commit evil or mischief'.

Compromising people's rights in economic matters is a prominent example of corruption, for ailing

economies always lead communities to corruption. All economic transactions should be strictly supervised.

Shu‘ayb insisted upon the establishment of a just economic system in this verse and along with dissuading his people from cheating others in economic transactions, he also called upon them to consider the rights of others, saying that they should use scales and weighing devices with fairness.

But this verse says:

"And O my people! Fill up the measure and the balance in justice..."

The establishment of justice and safeguarding everyone's due rights are principles that must be administered throughout all of society. Taking this one step further, he said that they should not falsely ascribe faults and defects to other people's goods, thus reducing the value of their goods, properties and belongings.

It continues saying:

"...and do not diminish the people their things:..."

Towards the end of the verse, going even further, he added that they should not corrupt the earth by committing mischief.

It says:

"...and do not mischief in the land, working corruption."

The above two verses strongly indicate that next to the belief in monotheism, a healthy economy is of primary importance. It also shows that anarchy in an economic system can be a major source of corruption in any society.

Surah Hud – Verse 86

بَقِيَّتُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَآ أَنَاْ عَلَيْكُم بِحَفِيظٍ

86. "(The lawful wealth) which is left by Allah is better for you, if you be believers. And I am not a guardian over you."

The Qur'anic term /baqiyatullah/, mentioned in this verse, refers to the dividends which one can obtain through a godly and allowed capital, and it is certainly a hundred percent clean.

However, according to the Islamic narrations, it refers to everything Divinely sanctioned that is left for humanity as a whole. One example of this are the faithful soldiers who return victoriously from a holy

war, for they have remained alive by the Divine will.

It refers also to the contemporary Imam, Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his auspicious advent), who is also known as /baqiyatullah/ since that noble person has been retained and stored for the guidance of mankind by the Divine Will.

Some Islamic narrations denote that one of the names of this honorable man (Hadrat Mahdi) is /baqiyatullah/[1] whom we greet with this name saying: /'assalamu 'alayka ya baqiatullah fi 'ardeh/.

When he appears in Mecca, he will recite the above verse in a loud voice and say:

"I am that promised Godly being kept by Allah.[2]

Certainly the other immaculate Imams (as) have been also entitled as: /baqiatullah/.

Surah Hud – Verse 87

قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ أَصَلاتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَن نَتْرُكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ ابَآؤُنَآ أَوْ أَن نَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَآءُ إِنَّكَ لَانتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ

87. "They said: 'O Shu'ayb! Does your prayer command you that we should leave off that our fathers worshipped, or we (should forsake to do) what we like with our property? Truly you are the forbearing, the right minded'."

Now let us look at how this obstinate people reacted in face of this Divinely reformist voice.

Those who idol-worshippers regarded their idols as symbols of their ancestral tradition and an emblem of their cultural identity, and who gained profit through fraudulent activity in their transactions, asked Shu'ayb if it was his religion of prayer that ordered him to encourage them to abandon the worship of that which their fathers had worshipped, and interfere in their transactions to make them lose their freedom in dealing with their own property.

The verse says:

"They said: 'O Shu'ayb! Does your prayer command you that we should leave off that our fathers worshipped, or we (should forsake to do) what we like with our property?..."

The people of Shu'ayb wrongly thought that no one should set the minimum limits for proprietors, rights, regarding domination in their properties, when in fact financial affairs should always be governed by correct criteria. Such criteria are clearly elucidated by the Divine prophets otherwise society would see a great degree of corruption.

They wanted to know how could such a forbearing, patient and understanding man, have said such a

thing.

They said:

"...Truly you are the forbearing, the right minded'."

Perhaps they thought that the particular movements and words of prayer would have had a negative effect on them, but if they truly meditated they would have found that prayer enlivens man's sense of responsibility, virtue, abstinence, piety, and gratitude, and makes him remember Allah and His Court of Justice.

For these reasons, man would be kept away from idol worship, blind obedience, short selling goods, and all types of fraud under the light of prayer.

Surah Hud – Verse 88

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنتُ عَلَي بَيِّنَةٍ مِن رَبّي وَرَزَقَنِي مِنْهُ رِزْقاً حَسَناً وَمَآ أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُخَالِفَكُمْ إِلَي مَآ أَنْهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ إِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلاَّ الإِصْلاَحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلاَّ بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ

88. "He said: 'O My people! Bethink you' If I be upon a clear proof from my Lord, and He has provided me with fair sustenance from Him? And I desire not, in opposition to you, to do that which I forbid you from it. I desire naught save reform so far as I am able. My success is only with Allah. On Him do I rely and unto Him I turn (repentant)'."

In the previous verse, the idol worshippers protested as to why they could not be free to dispose of their own property for good or, in this case, for evil. Shu'ayb (as) answered that if he had kept them from doing this, it would have been for the good of their own lives and their community, and it was not because of such things as hostility, envy, short sightedness or other things.

Individual interests must not be detrimental to the public interest.

The verse says:

"He said: 'O My people! Bethink you' If I be upon a clear proof from my Lord, and He has provided me with fair sustenance from Him? And I desire not, in opposition to you, to do that which I forbid you from it. I desire naught save reform so far as I am able..."

They had to stop thinking that a comfortable life could only be gained through crooked dealings and sinful activity, and Allah's prophets are an example that one could live a decent life without being polluted by these sins.

We must keep in mind that he who commands others to what is good and dissuades others from what is

bad must be a man of practice himself. The prophets themselves were not only planners and leaders; they themselves were the best examples of men of practice.

Shu'ayb continues saying:

"...My success is only with Allah. On Him do I rely and unto Him I turn (***repentant***)***'."***

Surah Hud – Verse 89

وَيَا قَوْمِ لاَ يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شِقَاقِي أَن يُصِيبَكُم مِثْلُ مَآ أَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوحٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ هُودٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ صَالِحٍ وَمَا قَوْمُ لُوطٍ مِنكُم بِبَعِيدٍ

89. "And O My people! Let not (***your***) ***breach with me cause you to sin, lest befalls you the like of what befell the people of Noah, or the people of Hud or the people of Salih; and the people of Lot are not far off from you."***

Shu'ayb advises his opponents that they should not burn their bridges behind themselves, i.e., because of their hostility to one person they should not destroy the destiny and happiness of themselves and their society.

They should stop thinking that the tragic stories of their ancestors were simplistic and parochial in nature. The histories of many people are similar and correspond with each other.

We must note that Allah's hands are always capable of meting out punishment. He can annihilate any nation anywhere regardless of what form they might take any time He wants.

Just as He drowned the people of Noah (as), swept away the people of Hud by storm, blasted the people of Salih (as) to extermination, and annihilated the tribe of Lot (as) by assailing them with stones and overturning the land with them.

The verse says:

"And O My people! Let not (***your***) ***breach with me cause you to sin, lest befalls you the like of what befell the people of Noah, or the people of Hud or the people of Salih; and the people of Lot are not far off from you."***

Surah Hud – Verse 90

وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي رَحِيمٌ وَدُودٌ

90. "(***Then come***) ***and ask forgiveness of your Lord, and turn unto Him*** (***in repentance***)***: Verily my***

Lord is Merciful, Loving.”

The dissidents and unbelievers must not only be warned and informed of the punishment to come, but they must also be shown the method by which they can reform themselves and the course of action that may attract Divine mercy.

They must be notified that in order to receive Allah’s favor and friendship3, they must follow the path of the prophets and the leadership of the Sinless Ones. If they repent and reconstruct their lives, they will receive positive answers from Allah.

The verse says:

*“(**Then come**) **and ask forgiveness of your Lord, and turn unto Him** (**in repentance**):…”*

Allah’s (s.w.t.) favor is not a passing affair, rather it is a continuous process and possesses numerous signs and characteristics, He does not only accept repentance, but He also loves those who repent.

It says:

“…Verily my Lord is Merciful, Loving.”

Surah Hud – Verse 91

قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ مَا نَفْقَهُ كَثِيراً مِمَّا تَقُولُ وَإِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِينَا ضَعِيفاً وَلَوْلاَ رَهْطُكَ لَرَجَمْنَاكَ وَمَآ أَنتَ عَلَيْنَا بِعَزِيزٍ

91. “They said: ‘O Shu‘ayb! We do not understand much of what you say; and most surely we see you weak among us. Were it not for your family, we would certainly stone you; and you are not mighty against us’.”

The prophets and the divine preachers have had to bear the utmost contempt and humiliation in the course of their mission in leading mankind on to the Right Path. Shu‘ayb (as) is one of those examples, for they did both to him.

They ridiculed and belittled his words and saw him as someone weak and insignificant. They denigrated his family, threatened him with death, and did not give due regard to his honor.

The verse says:

“They said: ‘O Shu‘ayb! We do not understand much of what you say; and most surely we see you weak among us. Were it not for your family, we would certainly stone you; and you are not mighty against us’.”

The idol worshippers told Shu‘ayb (as) that they did not grasp the meaning of his words. But what was

his speech about which they claimed they did not understand? Was it not but the following?

1– I am empowered to perform miracles and to offer you valid proofs.

"If I be upon a clear proof…"

2– I have no financial difficulties and I am not in need of your assistance.

3– I practice what I preach.

4– I intend to reform the society.

"I desire naught save reform…"

5– I struggle with all my might.

"…so far as I am able…"

6– I put all my hopes and trust in Allah.

"…On Him do I rely…"

7– I warn you of the consequences at the end of time and the actions of past generations.

"…The like of what befell the people of Noah…"

Surah Hud – Verse 92

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَهْطِي أَعَزُّ عَلَيْكُم مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُ وَرَآءَكُمْ ظِهْرِيّاً إِنَّ رَبّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ

92. "He said: 'O my people! Is then my family more esteemed with you than Allah? And you cast Him behind your back, with neglect. Verily my Lord encompasses what you do'."

We should not give priority to the rights of the people, or of groups, parties, or even of international law over Divine rights. We must stop excluding Allah's role in the political and social domains and not let it be dominated by any other matter.

According to the verse, these people refrained from doing harm to Shu'ayb because of the fear of retaliation from his tribe.

The verse says:

"He said: 'O my people! Is then my family more esteemed with you than Allah?…"

Shu‘ayb’s response was why could they not accept his words simply for Allah’s sake? Given that Allah was infinitely more powerful than his tribe, they did not give any importance to Him at all ignoring Him and violating His commandments.

It continues:

“...And you cast Him behind your back, with neglect...”

In fact they should stop thinking that Allah was not seeing what they did and did not hear what they said, for one can be sure, that the Lord is aware of all of our deeds.

The verse concludes:

“...Verily my Lord encompasses what you do’.”

Surah Hud – Verse 93

وَيَا قَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا عَلَي مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنّي عَامِلٌ سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَن يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ وَارْتَقِبُوا إِنّي مَعَكُمْ رَقِيبٌ

93. “And O my people! Act according to your ability. I will do (my part). Soon you will know on whom comes the Penalty disgracing him, and who it is a liar. And watch you; Verily I (too) am watching with you.”

As the disbelievers of the people of Shu‘ayb threatened to stone him to death while giving him their last words, Shu‘ayb, declaring his stand in the face of these threats did not flinch from the threat and issued a challenge to them, instead he said that they would do whatever they could, and might not spare anything. He should do what is in his power as well.

The verse says:

“And O my people! Act according to your ability. I will do (my part)...”

However, you will soon realize who will be the one suffering a humiliating punishment, and who is a liar. So, wait and see and I will do the same.

The verse continues saying:

“...Soon you will know on whom comes the Penalty disgracing him, and who it is a liar...”

You try to win me over with your power, numbers, wealth, and your influence and I shall also wait and see how the Divine punishment will soon entangle you and your misguided population, exterminating you from the face of the earth.

The verse says:

"...And watch you; Verily I (too) am watching with you."

Surah Hud – Verses 94 - 95

وَلَمَّا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا شُعَيْباً وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَأَخَذَتِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ

كَأَن لَمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيهَآ أَلاَ بُعْداً لِمَدْيَنَ كَمَا بَعِدَتْ ثَمُودُ

94. "And when Our Command came, We saved Shu'ayb and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us, and the (heavenly) Blast overtook those who were unjust, so they become motionless corpses in their abodes."
95. "As if they had never dwelt there. Behold! Away with (people of) Madyan, even as were cast away (the people of) Thamud."

Ultimately, the final stage did come. The Qur'an implies that when Allah's Command for the punishment of this misguided, oppressing and obstinate people was issued, after Shu'ayb and those who believed with him were saved by Divine favor and blessings, the terrible sound from the skies and the great death-dealing blast came over the people of Madyan and took them all by the throat.

The verse says:

"And when Our Command came, We saved Shu'ayb and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us, and the (heavenly) Blast overtook those who were unjust..."

In the aftermath of the blast, the Qur'an indicates that the people of Shu'ayb lay face down on the earth, they had died in their houses as a result of this great blast, and their corpses were left there to provide others with didactic lessons. Their lives were terminated in such a way that it was as if they had never existed there before.

The verse continues saying:

"...so they become motionless corpses in their abodes."

The Divine outrage is far superior in destruction than any other form of devastation, in the case of bombardment, for example, some people may have the chance to escape more or less unharmed, and some would remain alive after the event.

However, when the time for Allah's anger and punishment comes, it wipes the evildoers away in such a

way that it is as if no one had ever lived there.

The verse says:

"As if they had never dwelt there..."

Eventually, as was explained at the end of the stories of the peoples of 'Ad and Thamud, Allah's favor and blessings were removed from the people of Madyan as they had been removed from the people of Thamud.

It says:

"...Behold! Away with (people of) Madyan, even as were cast away (the people of) Thamud."

1. Bihar ul 'Anwar, vol. 46, p. 259
2. Tafsir-us-Safi, vol. 2, p. 468
3. The term /wadud/ refers to that kind of friendship which is everlasting.

Section 9: The Ministry of Moses

Surah Hud – Verses 96 - 97

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَي بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ

إِلى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلإِيْهِ فَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَآ أَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرَشِيدٍ

96. "And indeed We sent Moses with Our Signs and a manifest authority,"
97. "Unto Pharaoh and his chiefs; but they followed the command of Pharaoh, and the command of Pharaoh was not rightly guided."

The Champion Against Pharaoh

After finishing the story of Shu'ayb (as) and the people of Madyan, the Qur'an turns to part of the story of Musa bin Imran and his campaign against Pharaoh, which is the seventh story of the prophets referred to in this Surah.

The story of Moses (as) is more frequently mentioned in the Qur'an than that of any other prophet. In over thirty suras, the adventures of Moses, the Pharaoh and the Children of Israel have been mentioned

more than one hundred times.

The special aspect of the story of Moses, when compared to that of the other prophets, is that while the other prophets launched their campaigns against misguided and seduced people, Moses, apart from campaigning against them, also had to fight against the Pharaonic system, the oppressive, as well.

However, we must keep in mind that in this part of the story, we focus on one aspect of Moses' story, which, though small, yet carries an important lesson for all mankind.

At first, the verse implies that Allah (s.w.t.) sent Moses (as) empowering him with the performance of miracles and endowing him with a powerful argument.

The verse says:

"And indeed We sent Moses with Our Signs and a manifest authority,"

Moses was sent armed with impressive miracles and a powerful argument to Pharaoh and his people. However, the followers of Pharaoh, who felt that their illegitimate interests were being jeopardized, were not ready to submit themselves to him, and accept his miracles and his logic.

Thus, they followed Pharaoh's command. However, Pharaoh's command could never have guaranteed their happiness and was not conducive to their development and their salvation.

The verse says:

"Unto Pharaoh and his chiefs; but they followed the command of Pharaoh, and the command of Pharaoh was not rightly guided."

Surah Hud – Verse 98

يَقْدُمُ قَوْمَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَأَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ وَبِئْسَ الْوِرْدُ الْمَوْرُودُ

98. "He shall go before his people on the Day of Resurrection and lead them into the Fire, and evil is the place (they will be) led to."

The Arabic term /wird/ means 'the water which one enters into'. Originally it referred to movement towards water and approaching it. However, gradually, it came to mean 'to enter' in all cases.

At any rate, those who are leaders or Imams in this world would be pioneers by leading others towards Paradise or Hell in the Hereafter. A just Imam or an enlightened leader leads people towards Paradise, and the person leading others in the direction of injustice, leads others towards the Hell Fire.

The verse says:

“He shall go before his people on the Day of Resurrection and lead them into the Fire, and evil is the place (they will be) led to.”

Surah Hud – Verse 99

وَأُتْبِعُوا فِي هَذِهِ لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِئْسَ الرِّفْدُ الْمَرْفُودُ

99. “And they are followed by a curse in this world and on the Day of Judgment, and woeful is the gift which shall be given (them).”

Those who become followers of Pharaohs and despots are always associated with infamy and curses and their notorious names are always recorded in the books of history as people seduced by evil.

Thus they will be at a loss both in this world and in the next, and what a bad gift (i.e. the curse of Allah and being distanced from Him) is that which is going to be their share.

The verse says:

“And they are followed by a curse in this world and on the Day of Judgment, and woeful is the gift which shall be given (them).”

Surah Hud – Verse 100

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَآءِ الْقُرَي نَقُصُّهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْهَا قَآئِمٌ وَحَصِيدٌ

100. “(O’ Our Apostle!) This is of the tidings of the towns (which) We relate to you; some of them are still standing and some have been mown down.”

The act of telling didactic stories which are correct and documented is often a divinely inspired act which we must not ignore. Qur’anic stories are the most truthful and the most correct of stories for their story teller is Allah.

The holy verse says:

“(O’ Our Apostle!) This is of the tidings of the towns (which) We relate to you; some of them are still standing and some have been mown down.”

Incidentally, in some cases, Allah recounts that He had exterminated those disobedient people leaving only their traces behind. However, in other cases, He mentions that He had wiped out those evil doers completely together with all their effects.

However, story telling in the Qur'an has an important role and carries with it significant repercussions.

First of all the stories are impressive and attractive.

Secondly it paves the way for accepting the influence of rational and demonstrative reasoning.

Thirdly, it offers another proof of the miraculous nature of the Prophet (S) as an uninstructed individual who brings such news.

And fourthly, it offers instructive lessons for its audience.

Surah Hud – Verse 101

وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِن ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَمَآ أَغْنَتْ عَنْهُمْ ءَالِهَتُهُمُ الَّتِي يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مِن شَيْءٍ لَمَّا جَآءَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ وَمَا زَادُوهُمْ غَيْرَ تَتْبِيبٍ

101. "And We did no injustice unto them, but they were unjust unto themselves. When the decree of your Lord came, their gods, whom they invoked other than Allah, availed them not anything and they increased them naught but perdition."

The Arabic term /tatbib/ is derived from /tabb/ which means 'sequential loss and gradual death and destruction'.

To punish the oppressor is not called oppression. On the contrary, it is identical with justice. One's own destiny lies in his own hands, which is his own willful conduct.

No one can be man's savior but Allah.

None is able to stand against the Will of Allah.

The verse says:

"And We did no injustice unto them, but they were unjust unto themselves. When the decree of your Lord came, their gods, whom they invoked other than Allah, availed them not anything and they increased them naught but perdition."

Surah Hud – Verse 102

وَكَذَلِكَ أَخْذُ رَبِّكَ إِذَا أَخَذَ الْقُرَي وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ إِنَّ أَخْذَهُ أَلِيمٌ شَدِيدٌ

102. "And such is the grasp (of punishment) of your Lord when He grasps the townships that are

unjust. Verily His grasp (punishment) is painful, severe."

It is certain that Allah's punishment is quite hard and painful.

The verse says:

"And such is the grasp (of punishment) of your Lord when He grasps the townships that are unjust. Verily His grasp (punishment) is painful, severe."

This is a general Divine law and an eternal tradition which says that every nation inflicts oppression, violates Divinely established limits, and ignores the leadership, admonitions and guidance of Allah's prophets, it will be eventually arrested and annihilated by Divine punishment.

Surah Hud – Verses 103 - 104

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً لِمَنْ خَافَ عَذَابَ الأَخِرَةِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَجْمُوعٌ لَهُ النَّاسُ وَذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَشْهُودٌ

وَمَا نُؤَخِّرُهُ إِلاَّ لأَجَلٍ مَعْدُودٍ

103. "Surely in that is a sign for him who fears the chastisement in the Hereafter, that is a Day (when) mankind are to be gathered to, and that Day witnessed (by all)."
104. "And We do not postpone it, but to an appointed term."

In the previous noble verses, it was explicitly stated that as a general rule those who deny the truth will be dealt with accordingly, and will receive their deserved punishment.

This subtle verse of the holy Qur'an also states that these instructive accounts and the awful, painful events which our predecessors experienced, are some signs toward the path of truth for those who fear the punishments of the Hereafter to seek the truth and follow Divine guidance.

The verse says:

"Surely in that is a sign for him who fears the chastisement in the Hereafter…"

In every aspect, this fleeting world is very insignificant as compared to the Hereafter even in punishment and reprisal. The next world is much more expansive in extent, and those who believe in the Resurrection will be trembling when they confront these worldly Signs.

Towards the end of the verse, the Qur'an refers to two characteristics of the Day of Resurrection, by saying that it is the Day which is going to be witnessed by all, in such a way that all human beings will be present and see it for themselves.

The verse says:

"...that is a Day** (**when**) **mankind are to be gathered to, and that Day witnessed** (**by all**)**."

In view of the fact that some persons may claim that such a Day is a remote probability and it is not clear as to when it will arrive, so the Qur'an hastens to add that that Day will not be postponed except for a limited amount of time.

This will be only done for the sake of expediency so that the people of the world may apprehend those scenes elucidated in the Qur'an for their education and that the programs of the prophets can be implemented as far as possible.

The verse says:

"And We do not postpone it, but to an appointed term."

Surah Hud – Verses 105 - 107

يَوْمَ يَأْتِ لا تَكَلَّمُ نَفْسٌ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ شَقِيٌّ وَسَعِيدٌ

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَقُوا فَفِي النَّارِ لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَشَهِيقٌ

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالأَرْضُ إِلاَّ مَا شَآءَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِمَا يُرِيدُ

105. "The day** (**when**) **it comes, no soul shall speak but by His leave. Then some of them shall be wretched, and some happy."
106. "Then as for those who are wretched** (**they**) **shall be in the Fire, for them therein will be moaning and sighing."
107. "They will abide therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord pleases. Verily your Lord is the** (**Mighty**) **Doer of what He intends."

On the Day of Resurrection, the Reckoning Day, silence will prevail everywhere except for those who are permitted to speak.

In the foregoing verses, allusion was made to the Day of Resurrection and the general assembly of people in that great Court. Here, the Qur'an informs us of a part of the fate of people on the Day of the Judgment.

At first it implies that when the Day comes, no one can speak without Allah's permission.

The verse says:

"The day (when) it comes, no soul shall speak but by His leave…"

On that Day, people will go through various stages, each one having its own specifications. In some stages no questions are to be asked, even our mouths will remain shut, only those organs which have been involved and have been imprinted by the performance of their owners would bear testimony by a mute tonge.

However, in other stages, the silence imposed upon the mouths would be removed and mankind will start speaking with Allah's permission, confessing their sins. The guilty will blame each other, and try to attribute their own sins to others, holding them responsible for their deeds.

Towards the end of the verse, the Qur'an divides all people into two categories, saying that some people are stone hearted and some are soft hearted, some are happy while others are unhappy.

The verse continues saying:

"…Then some of them shall be wretched, and some happy."

This toughness and stone heartedness, on the one hand, and the contentment and happiness on the other, are no more than the consequences of individual behaviors, words, deeds and intentions in this world.

It then expounds upon the state of the wicked, stone hearted and vicious as well as the state of those prosperous and happy individuals in a concise, self explanatory sentence by saying that those who became wicked and stone hearted will be in agony, moaning and crying all the time.

These reflect the conditions of those who are deeply regretful, the kind of crying which saturates them to the point that shows their utmost discomfort because of the severity of their punishment.

The verse says:

"Then as for those who are wretched (they) shall be in the Fire, for them therein will be moaning and sighing."

It adds further that they will permanently stay in the Hell Fire until the heavens and the earth endure or unless Allah wishes otherwise, for Allah does whatever He wishes.

The verse says:

"They will abide therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord pleases. Verily your Lord is the (Mighty) Doer of what He intends."

Surah Hud – Verse 108

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سُعِدُوا فَفِي الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالأَرْضُ إِلاَّ ما شَآءَ رَبُّكَ عَطَآءً غَيْرَ مَجْذُوذٍ

108. "And as for those who are happy, they shall be in Paradise, abiding therein, so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord pleases: a gift without a break.[1]***"***

The Means of Happiness and Wretchedness

Happiness, which is considered as a lost paradise for man, results from the provision of the means of development for an individual or a community. The opposite of it is wretchedness in which the conditions conducive to progress, development and victory are unfavorable.

However, one must keep in mind that the primary source of happiness and prosperity as well as wretchedness lies in man's own will. It is he who can provide the means necessary for his own self actualization as well as that of his community. And it is he who can fight the causes of wretchedness or submit to it completely.

The logic of the prophets proclaims that the two are not inherent in man's nature and even the shortcomings of environment, family and heredity can be transformed through one's own determination.

If, on the other hand, we deny the principle of man's free will and take a deterministic approach in our attitude towards him, we will have to consider his happiness and wretchedness as inherent in him or as the effects of determinism which is definitely condemned in the literature of the prophets as well as in the school of rationalism.

Interestingly, in narrations attributed to the holy Prophet (S) and the Imams of the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), one reads that the means which provide grounds for one's happiness or wretchedness have been indicated.

The study of these Islamic narrations leads man to contemplate the Islamic way of thinking about this important problem, and gives him guidelines to help him seek objective realities and the true means of happiness instead of taking recourse in superstitious beliefs and wrong traditions.

Imam Sadiq (as), quoting his great grandfather, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen (as) says:

"The truth of the matter regarding prosperity is that the last stage of man's life ends with righteous deeds, and the fact of the matter concerning wretchedness is that the last stage of one's life comes to an end with a vicious act."[2]

And again the Prophet (S) declares:

"Four conditions, if fulfilled, result in happiness and four conditions pave the way for wretchedness. The

former consists of a wife with decent conduct, a spacious home, a worthy neighbor, and a good horse, while wretchedness consists of an evil doing wife, a bad neighbor, an awfully small house and a bad horse."[3]

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Perfect happiness comes about when one's whole life is spent serving Allah."[4]

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"The faithful who are wise are the happiest ones (on the earth)."[5]

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The most fortunate of people are those who associate with brave godly men.[6]

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"A good temper is one of the prime sources of one's happiness."[7]

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) remarks that one's happiness lies in his attaining religion and the practice of it for the Hereafter.[8]

The Prophet of Allah (S) says:

"Verily a Muslim man's happiness lies in his child resembling him, having a beautiful and God-fearing wife, a large house and a good horse (to ride)."[9]

As for wretchedness, Imam Rida (as) in a tradition says:

"Allah has allocated wretchedness for liars and culprits."[10]

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) once was asked:

"Who is the worst villain and the most vicious person?"

To which he answered:

"He who exchanges his religion for another person's worldly life."[11]

The holy Prophet (S) said:

"Shall I not tell you who the most vicious villain is?"

They answered:

“Yes, O’ Prophet of Allah!”.

He said:

“He who is empty handed in this world together with the punishment of the Hereafter.”[12]

We would like to take refuge in Allah from such a villain age.

Comparing the paths shown towards one’s happiness and wretchedness in the above quotations and their objectivity, with the superstitious beliefs which still attract large numbers of people in this era of the atom and space travel, one is led right away to the reality that Islamic instructions are quite logical and extremely well calculated.

And what a great number of people have there been who have become entangled in the complications arising from such superstitions preventing them from effectively living their daily lives bringing them only misfortune and pain.

Regarding happiness and wretchedness, Islam obliterates all superstitious beliefs, and guides us in everything that we do strengthening and clarifying our ethical responsibilities, attitudes, conduct, and way of thinking.

Surah Hud – Verse 109

فَلا تَكُ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِمَّا يَعْبُدُ هَؤُلآءِ مَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلاَّ كَمَا يَعْبُدُ ءَابآؤُهُم مِن قَبْلُ وَإِنَّا لَمُوَفُّوهُمْ نَصِيبَهُمْ غَيْرَ مَنقُوصٍ

109. “So be not then in doubt as to what these** (**men**) **worship. They worship nothing but what their fathers worshipped before** (**them**)**, and verily We shall pay them back** (**in full**) **their portion undiminished.”

One result which can be inferred from the stories of the previous generations is that the prophets and those following them, those who were truly faithful, should not fear the abundance of the enemies and with no hesitation try to defeat the unjust idol worshippers they are confronted because the helps of Allah are certain.

Therefore, He says to His Prophet that he should not have the shadow of a doubt as to what these people worship for they only follow in the footsteps of their ancestors and do not, in fact, really worship anything at all.

Thus their destiny is no better than that of their forefathers. They shall be compensated in full and Allah will not give them short of what is their due (of punishment). And were they to return to the true path, their share of Allah’s reward will be preserved.

The verse says:

"So be not then in doubt as to what these (men) worship. They worship nothing but what their fathers worshipped before (them), and verily We shall pay them back (in full) their portion undiminished."

In actual fact, this verse depicts that whatever we have read about past generations had not been fairy tales or myths and their realities have not been confined to only the previous generations. They constitute eternal examples for all men, past, present, and future, though they may take place in different circumstances and with different forms.

In the meantime, though this sublime verse is addressed to the Prophet (S), it targets the people so that they may not be in doubt or be hesitant.

1. Although Allah's Will has no limits even to expel the people in paradise, if we focus our attention on the climactic highlight of the last verse and the promises given in other verses, we can conclude that He would not do such a thing and when one enters Paradise he will remain there permanently.
2. Bihar ul 'Anwar, vol. 68, p. 364
3. Bihar ul 'Anwar, vol. 104, p. 98
4. Nahj ul Fasahah, p. 375
5. Ghurar ul Hikam, vol. 2, p. 397
6. Madinat ul Balaqah, vol. 2, p. 462
7. Nahj ul Fasahah, p. 57
8. Ghurar ul Hikam, vol. 4, p. 144
9. Bihar, vol. 73 p. 149
10. Bihar, vol. 5, p. 154
11. Bihar, vol. 72, p. 270
12. Bihar, vol. 100, p. 70

Section 10: Exhortation to Shun Evil

Surah Hud – Verse 110

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَي الْكِتَابَ فَاخْتُلِفَ فِيهِ وَلَوْلاَ كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِن رَبّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مُرِيبٍ

110. "And We certainly gave Moses the Book, then variance was (created) in it, and had not a Word gone forth before from your Lord, the matter would have been decided between them: but they are in grave doubt concerning it."

To console the Prophet (S), the Qur'an adds that if his people raised objections and fabricated pretexts

concerning the Qur'an, he should not worry, for Allah had also provided Moses with a Celestial Book (the Torah) and it became then an object for their differences, some accepted it while others rejected it.

The verse says:

"And We certainly gave Moses the Book, then variance was (created) in it…"

Allah is not hasty in punishing His enemies; it is for the sake of expediency and pragmatism in their education which requires such a course of action.

And if pragmatism in such a case did not allow for it, and the program which Allah had preordained for the Prophet in this respect did not require further delays, judgment would have been passed upon them and the punishment would have been inflicted upon them.

Nevertheless, they had not yet believed in the Truth, everything about which they entertained with suspicion and viewed with pessimism.

The verse continues saying:

"…and had not a Word gone forth before from your Lord, the matter would have been decided between them: but they are in grave doubt concerning it."

Surah Hud – Verse 111

وَإِنَّ كُلاًّ لَمَّا لَيُوَفِّيَنَّهُمْ رَبُّكَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ إِنَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

111. "And certainly, to all will your Lord recompense them their deeds in full; verily He is aware of what they do."

In stressing the matter further, the Qur'an adds in this verse that Allah will remunerate both groups, the faithful as well as the idol worshippers, without any failing or shortcoming, in lieu of the kind of conduct they had been engaged in.

The verse says:

"And certainly, to all will your Lord recompense them their deeds in full;…"

This does not create any difficulties for Allah, for He is well aware of everything and of what they do.

It continues saying:

"…verily He is aware of what they do."

It is interesting to note that the Qur'an says that Allah will return to them (the recompense of) their deeds. This is another allusion to the subject of the embodiment of deeds and that the reward and retribution of man, indeed, are his own deeds which will change in form and reach him.

Anyway, in the Divine system of belief, no deed will be left unanswered and uncompensated for; if it is good, it will be rewarded with good and if it is evil it will be compensated for with the same.

Surah Hud – Verse 112

فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَآ أُمِرْتَ وَمَن تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلاَ تَطْغَوْا إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

112. "Therefore stand firm (***O Prophet***) ***as you are commanded, and*** (***also***) ***he who has turned*** (***unto Allah***) ***with you, and*** (***O' men***) ***do not transgress*** (***from the Path***)***; verily He sees well what you do."***

The Command of Steadfastness

After recounting the lives of the prophets and former tribes and the reasons for their success, and after reinforcing the will of the Prophet (S), thereby in this verse He commands him (S) the most important duty, saying that he must stand firm as he had been commanded.

The verse says:

"Therefore stand firm (***O Prophet***) ***as you are commanded…"***

He must stand firm in propagation and guidance, in his struggles and battles, in carrying out Allah's orders, and in implementing the instructions of the Qur'an.

However, this stance must not be for the sake of pleasing others, nor should it be for bigotry, nor for the acquisition of titles, nor for acquiring wealth, position, success and power. It must be for the execution of Allah's command as he had been instructed.

However, this order does not concern the Prophet (S) only, it also instructs those who are following in his footsteps for approaching Allah.

The verse continues saying:

"…and (***also***) ***he who has turned*** (***unto Allah***) ***with you…"***

The Qur'an advises the kind of persistence which avoids both extremes, neither more nor less, and the order not to be unruly, signifies the kind of persistence which avoids all kinds of transgression, for Allah is well aware of every action which we do. No cessation of movement or pause, and word or schedule

remains hidden from Him.

It says:

"...and (O' men) do not transgress (from the Path); verily He sees well what you do."

This is a sensitive yet disturbing verse. There is a hadith from Ibn Abbas which says: "There is no verse revealed more severe and more difficult for the Prophet (S) than this verse. Therefore, when the companions of the Prophet (S) asked him why his hair had turned gray so soon, and the signs of age prematurely appeared on his face, he said:

"The Surah Al-Waqi'ah and the Surah Hud made me age."

Some other traditions indicate that when the above verse was revealed, the Prophet (S) said:

"Fasten your belts! Fasten your belts (as it is time for struggling and working)"; and since that time, he was never seen smiling.

The reason is clear, for there are four commands in this verse, each of which imposes a heavy duty upon man.

Today, our responsibilities as Muslim leaders can also be summarized as: persistence, sincerity, leadership of the believers, abstinence from unruliness, and non-violence.

Victory over our enemies, who have been surrounding us from all sides, exploiting us in all cultural, political, economic, social, and military spheres, might not be possible without the implementation of the four principles mentioned above.

Surah Hud – Verse 113

وَلاَ تَرْكَنُوا إِلَي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمْ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَوْلِيَآءَ ثُمَّ لاَ تُنصَرُونَ

113. "And do not incline to those who are unjust, lest the Fire will touch you; and you have no protectors other than Allah, nor shall you be helped.

Reliance upon the Unjust!

This verse explains one of the most fundamental programs in the realm of social, political, military, and ideological spheres of activity.

It addresses all Muslims, putting forward a decisive duty, it implies that we should not seek support from oppressors, and never rely upon them for such an act for it causes us to be surrounded by the Fire of

Hell and we have no one from whom to expect support but Allah.

The verse says:

"And do not incline to those who are unjust, lest the Fire will touch you; and you have no protectors other than Allah, nor shall you be helped.

In which matters must one not rely upon the transgressors?

In the first instance, obviously, we must not share in the atrocities they commit and seek support from them in this regard.

Secondly, reliance upon them must stop where the Muslim community stands to be weakened, and its independence and self sufficiency jeopardized, this type of dependency will bear no fruit but frustration and loss of independence on the part of Islamic communities.

As to the idea that Muslims should establish commercial or scientific relations with non Muslim communities on the basis of protecting Muslim interests and independence as well as their security is not unprecedented in the history of Islam nor is it forbidden in Islam and it does not fit into the meaning of seeking assistance from the oppressors.

During the era of the Prophet (S) and after him such relationships with non Muslims had also existed. However, one must not, at the same time, obey the oppressors or put his hope in them, for we read in the narrations that friendship with the unjust and obedience to them are examples of submission to tyranny.

In a narration, it has been said:

"Do not put your hope in an oppressor even if he is a member of your family or a friend."

In Al-Kafi, there is also a narration which says:

"Allah has forbidden you to spare even one minute when an oppressor is to be hanged, for, in such a case, you would have supported him."

Refer to Tafsir al Burhan-As-Safi, Usul Al-Kafi, and the Bihar-ul-'Anwar for further information.

Explanation

1- Every kind of dependence on internal and external oppressors is prohibited.

2- Oppression and assisting the oppressors or even relying upon them constitute capital sins and those affiliated with it are subversives. (Every sin which Allah has spoken of as being punishable with the Fire is considered as a capital sin)

3- Relying upon and trusting the oppressor will lead to Allah's Hell. Therefore, how is the situation of the oppressor himself going to be?

4- Instead of taking recourse to the unjust, put your trust in Allah.

5- The result of relying upon tyrants is isolation and estrangement.

6- As the obedience from /ulul-'amr/ (the political and religions chiefs appointed to issue decrees on behalf of Allah), is obligatory and, on the other hand, since relying upon and seeking the support of the unjust is forbidden, therefore the /ulul-'amr/ cannot be unjust, they must necessarily be "immaculate", too, because sin is considered an example of injustice.

(***And do not incline to those who are unjust...***)

Surah Hud – Verses 114 - 115

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلاَةَ طَرَفَيِ النَّهَارِ وَزُلَفاً مِنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئاتِ ذَلِكَ ذِكْرَى لِلذ اكِرِينَ

وَاصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

114. "And establish the prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night; verily the good deeds remove evil deeds. That is a reminder for the mindful."
115. "And be patient (and steadfast); for verily Allah does not waste the reward of the righteous (ones)."

Prayer and Steadfastness

These two verses point to two of the most important Islamic instructions that embody the spirit of Islam and shape its foundation. At first, the Qur'an commands us to establish the prayers, declaring that we must keep our prayers at both ends of the day and at the time of nightfall.

The apparent meaning of the phrase /tarafay-in-nahar/ (on both sides of the day) is the morning and evening prayers and /zulaf/ is in keeping with the /'iša'/ (the prayer of nightfall).

In the meantime, as the midday prayer and the afternoon prayer have been explained in other verses, they have not been repeated here. However, according to one quotation, they are also mentioned in this verse as well, though this verse does not aim at explaining all the daily prayers.

The verse says:

"And establish the prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night;..."

Afterwards, to specifically stress the importance of the daily prayers, and other rituals, acts of worship and the performance of good deeds in general, it declares that good conduct nullifies evil acts.

The verse continues saying:

"...verily the good deeds remove evil deeds..."

This is a reminder for those who try to lend ears to such matters. It says:

"...That is a reminder for the mindful."

The above verse, like some other Qur'anic verses, illustrates the influence of good deeds in removing the evil effect of evil deeds. Good deeds, which have their origin in Divine motives, bestow purity and beauty upon the human spirit which may wipe out the effects of sin from it, turning the darkness of sins into light.

The Extraordinary Importance of Prayers

In the numerous narrations from the Prophet (S) and the immaculate Imams (as) which concern the above verse, one easily finds interpretations which unveil the extraordinary importance of prayers in Islam.

Ali (as) is quoted as saying:

"The Prophet (S) and I were waiting for our prayers inside the mosque when a man stood up saying: "O Messenger of Allah! I have committed a sin." The Prophet (S) turned his face away from him.

When the prayers ended, the same man stood up and repeated the same sentence. The Prophet (S) said: "Have you not joined us in prayer? And have you not done your ablutions well for it ?" The man answered: "Yes". He said: "This is an atonement for your sin."[1]

The sublime Prophet (S) said:

"At the times of prayer, an angel is certain to say: 'O people! Stand up and put out the Fire you have lit (against your selves), by means of your prayers.'"

And the Prophet (S) also said:

"The five daily prayers are like a stream running in front of your houses. Once you wash yourselves five times a day in that stream, you will be clean of all pollution. (It is the same as cleaning your soul from all kinds of pollution by establishing your five daily prayers.)"

Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) said:

"Whenever man is in the state of prayer, his body, clothes, and whatever is found around him engage in

giving glory of Allah."[2]

However, prayer insures man who has committed sinful acts, by wiping his heart clean of the dust of sin.

Prayer enables one's potentialities to flourish in the depths of his soul. It also strengthens one's will, purifies his heart and cleans up his spirit.

Prayer in this way can be a superior school of education, provided that it is not just treated as a series of rituals in form without substance.

Following the human shaping schedule of prayer, and the description concerning the impact of the virtues upon the vices, the Qur'an commands perseverance in this verse, saying that we should stay patient, for Allah does not spoil the rewards of those who act with righteousness.

The verse says:

"And be patient** (**and steadfast**)**; for verily Allah does not waste the reward of the righteous** (**ones**)**."

All of this means that performing decent acts is not possible without patience and perseverance.

The Qur'anic term /sabr/ includes all aspects of forbearance against difficulties, oppositions, harms, emotions, outrage and disasters.

Patience and perseverance is a fundamental general principle which is sometimes coupled in the Qur'an with prayers. It is perhaps for the reason that prayer enables man to move and it ordains him to have patience and perseverance.

And these two, that is 'movement' and resistance, when coupled with each other, are the main factors for victory. Finally, let us focus upon the most hopeful of the verses of the Qur'an:

Hadrat Ali (as) coming upon a group in discussion asked them:

"Do you know which is the most hopeful of the verses of the Qur'an?"

In response, everyone named one verse which suited his own mood.

Some suggested the verse, which says: ***"Verily Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that…"***[3] means that Allah forgives all sins except idol worship.

Others were of the opinion that the verse in question is the one which says:

"And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his own self, then seeks forgiveness of Allah, shall find Allah forgiving, Merciful"[4].

This verse means that he who is a wrongdoer and a tyrant, if he asks for forgiveness, and apologizes, he will find Allah compassionate and merciful.

Still others cited the holy verse declaring:

"Say: 'O My servants who have acted extravagantly against their own selves! Do not despair of the mercy of Allah; surely Allah forgives the faults altogether; verily He is the Forgiving, the Merciful."[5]

Others were of the opinion that it was the verse saying:

"And those who, when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their selves, remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins – and who forgives the sins except Allah? – And they (the pious) do not knowingly persist in what they have committed."[6]

Meaning that those who have committed an evil act, oppressing themselves, think of Allah and ask forgiveness from Him, and who is there to forgive sins except Allah?

After hearing all those views, Hadrat Ali said:

"I heard from my dear one, the Prophet of Allah (S), who said: "I hope to a verse in the Book of Allah, which says: "And establish the prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night; verily the good deeds remove evil deeds. That is a reminder for the mindful."

Then the Prophet (S) continued: 'O Ali! By the One Who appointed me as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner towards people. Whenever a person makes ablution for prayer, his sins will fall off; and when he turns toward Qiblah he will become purified.

O' Ali! The example of the daily prayers resembles one who washes himself in a stream in front of his house, fives times every day."[7]

Surah Hud – Verse 116

فَلَوْلاَ كَانَ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ أُولُواْ بَقِيَّةٍ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْفَسَادِ فِي الأَرْضِ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً مِمَّنْ أَنْجَيْنَا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَآ أُتْرِفُوا فِيهِ وَكَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ

116. "But why were there not, among the generations before you, persons possessed understanding (and authority), prohibiting (people) from mischief in the earth, except a few whom We saved from among them? And those who were unjust pursued what they were made to enjoy and they were guilty."

The Arabic term /baqiyyah/ means 'remainder', but it usually refers to 'virtue' and 'power' in Arabic,

maybe because one stores his precious belongings with himself and preserves them to remain; or perhaps because some people who have more power stay on the scene. The holy word /baqiyyah/ has been employed three times in the Qur'an.

In this verse, Allah has criticized a group of believers as to why they do not equip themselves with knowledge and power so as to warn the society. This warning, which has repeatedly been used in the Qur'an, is accompanied with the word /laula/.

At any rate, in this holy verse and the previous one, a fundamental social principle, which stands out in saving human societies from corruption and self-destruction, has been mentioned.

That is, in every society where there is a group of conscious learned and dutiful people who are committed to not remain silent in the face of corruption, who launch campaigns against it, and who lead in developing the ideological awareness of the people, that society will not suffer from self-destruction.

But, when indifference and silence is the rule of the game everywhere, and then society is made defenseless against the elements of corruption, self-destruction will surely be its eventual outcome.

Therefore, while referring to the previous peoples which had been the target of all kinds of disasters, the Qur'an asks why it is that in the previous centuries, there were no righteous people of knowledge and power to prevent all kinds of corruption on the earth.

The verse says:

"But why were there not, among the generations before you, persons possessed understanding (and authority), prohibiting (people) from mischief in the earth…"

The role of /'ulu baqiyyah/ (those possessed understanding and authority) in the survival of society, is so sensitive that one must say that without them the right of societies to survive will be removed from them. This is what the above verse implies.

To make an exception to this rule, the Qur'an says:

"…except a few whom We saved from among them?…"

Despite the fact that this small group observed the rules of persuading others to perform what was good and dissuading them from what was evil, their number was so limited that they could not have any success in reforming the society.

This is reflected in examples like Lot and his small family, Noah and his limited number of believers, Salih and his few followers. The oppressors of these societies, who constituted the majority, pursued their extravagant way of life and were so proud and saturated with pleasures that they committed all kinds of sin.

The verse says:

"…And those who were unjust pursued what they were made to enjoy and they were guilty."

Such unrestricted affluence and hedonism are the sources of all kinds of deviations and usually originate among affluent families, as their carefree state hinders them from comprehending social realities and covers them with sin, leaving them no chance for becoming familiar with real human values.

Whereas verse 114 deals with prayers, this verse is concerned with dissuading others from doing evil deeds. It is appropriate to mention here some of the verses of the Glorious Qur'an which deal with the subject of prayers together with persuading others to engage in decent acts and dissuading others from committing evil deeds.

Such verses are as follows:

A. "…Verily prayer restrains from indecency and evil…"[8]

B. "…Verily the good deeds remove the evil deeds,…"[9]

C. "…Keep up prayer, enjoin the good and forbid evil…"[10]

D. "Those who, should We establish them in the land, will keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong;…"[11]

The utmost responsibility thus lies with those who are knowledgeable and powerful, and the result of reformers' sympathy and reformation in society is salvation from Allah's anger and benefiting from His compassion.

The key to the downfall of former generations has been their indifference and failure to dissuade others from doing wrong, hedonism, and criminal activity, the vicious triangle of destruction.

We hope that Allah may save us, our children, and our coming generations from these dangers and deviations.

Surah Hud – Verse 117

وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ لِيُهْلِكَ الْقُرَى بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلُهَا مُصْلِحُونَ

117. "Nor would your Lord destroy the townships unjustly while their people acted well."

Allah (s.w.t.) removes His wrath from societies because of the presence of benevolent and righteous individuals who mend their society.

Incidentally, simply being righteous is not sufficient, one must be encouraging others to be righteous as well. Therefore, to emphasize this reality, the Qur'an implies that the reason why Allah eradicated these peoples was because there were no righteous reformists among them.

It was not the case that the Almighty oppressively sought the destruction of established communities despite attempts being made to purify them of all impurities. The verse says:

"Nor would your Lord destroy the townships unjustly while their people acted well."

Whenever a society was oppressive as a whole but had rediscovered itself, and was about to reform and alter itself, there would be reason for it to remain, while if it remained oppressive and did not try to reform, and purge itself of its evil ways, there would be no reason for it to survive.

Surah Hud – Verse 118

وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ

118. "And had your Lord willed, He would have made mankind a single people: yet they cease not differing."

Allah's way of treatment in creation of men is based on liberty, and freedom in choosing their own ideas and beliefs. Man's choice and freedom to choose his way of life and ideas has been frequently referred to in the Glorious Qur'an.

That is, although Allah leads man towards Himself, He does not impose His will upon him by force, and He has not commanded the sublime Prophet (S) to compel people, He has only demanded him to remind people of their duty, and show them the right path.

The holy Qur'an in this regard says:

"Therefore do thou give admonition, for you are one to admonish".

"Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs." 12

Thus, Allah reveals the virtuous path in such a way that human nature, discriminating between good and evil, recognizes them from within itself, and for this reason, from out ward, He sends the prophets (as) to guide mankind.

It is the man himself who must fully and voluntarily select his own way, the Path of Truth or the path of evil and wrongdoing. Therefore, He has alluded to one of the prominent traditions in the course of creation which is the basis of other affairs that relates to human beings.

It is the individual differences relating to the mind, the body, personal views, zeal and love as well as the issue of man's freedom of will.

The Qur'an remarks that if Allah wanted He could have created a single nation out of mankind (but He did not do such a thing) and human beings have always had differences to settle.

This is emphasized in order to show that His insistence for obeying His commands does not reflect a lack of ability to put everyone on one track and on one predetermined path. It stands to reason that such a faith would be of no use.

Nor would such a homogeneous, unified and compulsory faith based upon involuntary motives lead anywhere, it would reflect no personality distinctions, no means of development and growth, and have no basis for rewarding the good.

Man's supreme value essentially lies in his freedom of will which differentiates him from other existing beings. Different tastes, different ways of thinking, indeed, differences of personality and intellectual makeup all form parts of one society, providing multiple aspects of those dimensions that make man who he is and it is that which gives him a distinct status.

It is also natural that once freedom of will comes in the scene, differences regarding ideas and schools of thought must exist.

Surah Hud – Verse 119

إِلاَّ مَن رَحِمَ رَبُّكَ وَلِذَلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لأَمْلأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

119. "Except those on whom your Lord has Mercy; and for that (mercy) did He create them. And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled: 'Certainly I will fill Hell with jinn and the mankind together'."

In this verse the Qur'an indicates that the people disagree with each other in their acceptance of the Truth except those upon whom is Allah's Mercy.

The verse says:

"Except those on whom your Lord has Mercy;..."

However, this Divine blessing is not confined to a certain group, but all humankind can benefit from it if they want.

Those who wish to come under Allah's favor will find an open gate for His all inclusive Mercy and Grace which are made available to mankind through their own reasoning, the guidance of the prophets, and

heavenly Books which have been revealed to them.

The verse says:

"...and for that (mercy) did He create them. And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled:..."

Once they utilize these favors and blessings the gates of Paradise and eternal bliss will be opened for them, otherwise, the command of Allah has been issued that He will fill Hell with the disobedient and arrogant ones from among the Jinn and men.

The verse continues saying:

"...'Certainly I will fill Hell with jinn and the mankind together'."

Surah Hud – Verse 120

وَكُلاًّ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنبَآءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبّتُ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَجَآءَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَذِكْرَي لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

120. "And all that We relate to you of the account of the messengers is something in order that with it We make firm your heart and in this there has come to you the Truth, and an admonition and a reminder to the believers."

In this verse and in the verses that follow, with which Surah Hud ends, there is a general conclusion which sums up the issues discussed thus far.

As the main part of this Surah dealt with the didactic stories of the prophets and the former generations of mankind, the Qur'an summarizes the precious results of these stories under four topics by saying that the stories of each of the prophets have been mentioned to reinforce the heart of the Prophet (S) in order to strengthen his will.

The verse says:

"And all that We relate to you of the account of the messengers is something in order that with it We make firm your heart..."

Afterwards, referring to the second most important result of those stories, the Qur'an implies that it brings to light the facts and realities concerning life and death, the victories and defeats, and the factors concerning the success and failure of communities.

It continues saying:

"...and in this there has come to you the Truth..."

The third and the fourth consequences are that they provide the faithful with exhortations, and reminders of the results of good or bad conduct.

It says:

"…and an admonition and a reminder to the believers."

This verse stresses once again that the historical facts which have been revealed by the Qur'an must not be taken lightly or used for amusing audiences, for they form the best instructional guidelines in all aspects of life for all people in all times.

Surah Hud – Verses 121 - 122

وَقُل لِلَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ اعْمَلُوا عَلَي مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنَّا عَامِلُونَ

وَانْتَظِرُوا إِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُونَ

121. "And say to those who do not believe: 'Act according to your ability; we shall do (our part)';"
122. "And wait you! We too are surely waiting."

Allah commands the Prophet (S) when confronting their stiff-neckedness and obstinacy to do the same as the previous prophets did and say what they said, that the disbelievers should do all that is in their power and do not spare in their efforts, and the Prophet and the believers will do likewise.

The verse says:

"And say to those who do not believe: 'Act according to your ability; we shall do (our part)';"

He also should tell the unbelievers to wait and see and the believers too, will wait and see, for one side will win and the other will be defeated.

The verse says:

"And wait you! We too are surely waiting."

The unbelievers seek the defeat of the believers but the latter will wait for the real Divine punishment which the unbelievers will receive either by means of the hands of the believers or directly from the side of Allah.

Surah Hud – Verse 123

وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

123. "And to Allah** (**alone**) **belong the Unseen of the heavens and the earth, and to Him the whole affairs will be returned; Then worship Him, and put** (**all**) **your trust in Him, and your Lord is not heedless of what you do."

The last verse of this Surah deals with monotheism: (the monotheistic nature of knowledge, the monotheistic view of acts, and also the monotheistic way of worship), just as the beginning verses of the Surah that had dealt with knowledge of monotheism.

In fact, three sub sections of monotheism are indicated here. First, it refers to the monotheistic nature of Allah's knowledge saying that the knowledge of the hidden realities of the heavens and the earth belongs only to Him, and it is only He Who is aware of all secrets hidden and revealed.

The verse says:

"And to Allah** (**alone**) **belong the Unseen of the heavens and the earth…"

The knowledge of everyone besides Him is confined and limited and even this very limited knowledge is received from the Divine source. Therefore, omniscience, the essential knowledge, regarding the whole things throughout the entire universe, is particular to Him alone.

On the other hand, referring to the monotheistic nature of acts, the Qur'an says that it is He Who is in command of all acts, and all things will be returned to Him.

It continues saying:

"…and to Him the whole affairs will be returned;…"

The third point is said as a conclusion to these statements which is that unlimited knowledge and endless power belong solely to Him and everything will eventually return to Him, therefore we should worship Him alone and trust only in Him.

It says:

"…Then worship Him, and put** (**all**) **your trust in Him…"

This stage of monotheism is the stage of worship and abstinence from all unruly behaviour, misconduct, rebellion, and sin, for Allah is not unaware of all that we do.

It continues saying:

"...and your Lord is not heedless of what you do."

The End of Surah Hud

1. The commentary of Majma'-ul-Bayan, concerning this verse.
2. Bihar, vol. 82, p. 213
3. Surah An-Nisa, No. 4, verse 48
4. Ibid, verse 110
5. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 53
6. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran verse 135
7. Majma'-ul-Bayan, the commentary, and Kanz-ud-Daqayiq.
8. Surah Ankabut, No. 29, verse 45
9. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 114
10. Surah Luqman, No. 31, verse 17
11. Surah Hajj No. 22, verse 41
12. Surah Al-Ghashiyah, No. 88, verses 21& 22

Surah Yusuf, Chapter 12

Surah Yusuf (Joseph),
No. 12 (Revealed in Mecca)
111 verses in 12 Sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The Magnitude and Glory of the Qur'an

The Qur'an, which is a reflection of the magnificence and glory of Allah and is an eternal and everlasting miracle in itself, presents clear evidence and accurately foretells events. As a witness to these events, it presents true historical facts backed by strong logic and penetrating insight.

It is the repository of a superior kind of grace and is a boundless ocean of merits. It offers strategies, it encourages while at the same time gives warnings, and it gives accounts of man's past while also predicting the future.

It is unique in that it is as accessible to the common people as well as to the elite among the scholars. It contains material from the invisible world as well as from the physical world. It illustrates the causes for the enhancement one's honour and the factors which bring about one's wretchedness.

It enlightens one’s thinking, reasoning, and way of meditation and logic while we are alive and at the same time it provides companionship during our solitary confinement in the grave and on the Day of Resurrection.

The Qur’an is a repository of all knowledge and every science, and is the only celestial Book which has not been distorted. The more science develops the more its secrets unveil.

Its parables, metaphors and its similes are never wearisome and its repetitions often convey a wide variety of meanings. The Qur’an can be used as a criterion for verifying the words of the men of Allah.

We have been told that whenever we hear words attributed to those holy men we should compare them to the Qur’an and if they do not conform to it, then we should reject them.

The Qur’an is considered as the “*Greater Weighty Thing*” and the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) are considered by the believers as “*The Lesser Weighty Thing*”. In this regard, the Prophet (S) reiterated several times:

“I have left two great gifts amongst you (*Muslims*) *which will never be separated until the Day of Resurrection when they will join me at the Pool of Kauthar.”*

Even now the Ahl-ul-Bayt, in the person of Hadrat Mahdi, (may Allah hasten his advent) is still coupled with the Book of Allah, and any commentary written on the Qur’an which ignores well documented narrations that originate from them are invalid and misguiding, for the holy Prophet (S) said:

“If you take recourse to these two; the Book and my Ahl-ul-Bayt, you will never lose your way.”

Certainly, taking recourse to the one and neglecting the other will lead to misguidance.

The Content of the Surah

Before beginning our discussion of the verses of this Surah, it is necessary to point out a number of points:

1 - All of the verses of this Surah, except a few, concern the beautiful, instructive biography of Hadrat Yusuf (as) and this is the reason why this Surah is called “Yusuf”.

And, it is also for this reason that out of the 27 times that the name of Yusuf has been mentioned in the Qur’an, 25 of them are found in this Surah. The other two suras in which his name has been mentioned are in verse 34 of Surah Al-Ghafir, and in verse 84 of Surah Al-’An‘am.

The content of this Surah is well integrated in one reading and it presents different highlights of a single story expressed in ten sections through an extraordinarily fluent, concise, interesting, and attractive manner.

Ignorant story tellers or those who have questionable objectives in mind, have sought to present this story as an exciting love story for the whimsical, they try to change everything around sexuality and present it as if it was a Hollywood romance, providing a distorted picture of the true Yusuf and his real biography.

The Qur'an, whose everything is paradigm, narrates the story revealing sublime lessons in chastity, abstemiousness, virtue, faith, and domination over individual selfishness. This has been so carefully arranged that if someone was to read it several times, he would still be involuntarily drawn by its powerful attraction.

It is for this reason that the Qur'an has called it the Best of Stories /ahsanul qasas/ and the Surah has presented instructive lessons for contemplation.

2 – Focusing our attention on the verses of this Surah reveals the fact that the holy Qur'an is a miracle in all its dimensions, and the champions it presents in its stories are real, not imaginary and unique in their class.

There is Abraham, the iconoclastic champion who, with his sublime and unconquerable spirit stood alone opposing powerful despots.

There is Moses, the hero who taught an obstinate people to go against a recalcitrant oppressor.

And then there is Yusuf (Joseph) (as), the champion who embodied righteousness, purity and virtue versus a passionate, beautiful and conniving woman.

On reading this Surah we cannot help but be struck with wonderment at the revelation of the Qur'an and its ability to relate a story of such subtlety and profundity.

Among the many subjects covered by this Surah, the story of Yusuf also deals with the sensitive issue of love, the Qur'an does not overlook or bypass these issues, indeed, it speaks of them in great detail but in such a way that no undesirable or negative effect would be left on the reader.

It delves deeply into every issue and proposition but one would find that powerful rays of virtue may dominate the discussion at all times.

3 – **The story of Yusuf before and after Islam:** Undoubtedly, the story of Yusuf had been known before Islam. This story has been extensively mentioned in 14 chapters (37 to 50) in the Book of Genesis. A careful reading of these 14 chapters shows that what is found in the Torah is quite different from what is in the Qur'an.

A comparison of the two accounts reveals the extent to which the Qur'anic version is void of all the superstitions found in the Torah.

And the fact that the Qur'an says to the Prophet: "***Before this, thou too was among those who knew it not***", is a reference made to the Prophet's lack of prior awareness of the story and the sheer truth of this instructive biography. Indeed, whatever the prophets possess is God–given.

After the dawn of Islam, historians also wrote accounts and interpretations of the story. In Persian poetry and literature, the first story told about Yusuf and Zulaykha is ascribed to Ferdowsi.

Then the poems composed by Shahabuddin 'Am'aq and Mas'udi Ghomi, and later, we find the famous poetry entitled 'Yusuf and Zulaykha' composed by 'Abdurahman Jami, the famous poet of the 9th century A.H.

4– Why is the story of Yusuf, unlike that of the other prophets, expounded in one place? One of the characteristics of this story is that, unlike the story of the other prophets, it is discussed as a whole in one format.

This is different from that of the stories of the other prophet which have been recounted in separate sections in various suras of the Qur'an. The reason for this is that separation of the climaxes of this story destroys its integrity and in order to arrive at the proper and necessary conclusions, it must be offered as an integrated whole.

Another specification of this holy Surah is that whereas the stories of the other prophets recounted in the Qur'an, usually deal with the issue of their struggles and campaigns against unruly and rebellious peoples, but the story of Yusuf makes no mention of such matters.

On the contrary, it revolves around the life of Yusuf himself and his passage through difficult stages of life which eventually culminates with him becoming a powerful man in the Egyptian government.

5– The virtues of Surah Yusuf: The Islamic narrations cite numerous virtues for reciting this Surah, among which one can find a tradition by Imam Sadiq (as) saying:

"Whoever recites this Surah every day or every night, Allah will enable him to be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection having a beauty equal to that of the beauty of Yusuf, he will have no difficulties on that Day and he will be among the righteous subjects of Allah."

We have already pointed out repeatedly that the narrations that have come down to us concerning the virtues of reading the suras of the Qur'an do not mean a superficial reading of the text without meditating and acting upon them. On the contrary, it means a careful reading that would encourage one to think and in turn lead to a practical application of the text.

Section 1: Yusuf Suffers

Surah Yusuf – Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الر تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Alif 'A', Lam 'L', Ra 'R'. These are the verses of the Book (***which makes the truth***) ***Manifest."***

A General Note

Everything is dependent upon Allah, and every person lives with Him.

Every type of evolution and progress is initiated in His name and will be realized by executing the programs He has ordained by means of prophets, the personal development of prophets has been fulfilled in the Name of Allah, for had there not been any trust put in Him, the prophets could not have overcome the difficulties of the life which had confronted them.

This Surah also begins with the abbreviated letters of alif, lam, and ra' which exhibit the magnificence of the Qur'an and the synthesizing of profound and meaningful verses out of simple letters of the Arabic alphabet.

Perhaps, it is for this reason that after mentioning the abbreviated letters, Allah (s.w.t.) immediately refers to the magnificence of the Qur'an by saying:

"...These are the verses of the Book (***which makes the truth***) ***manifest."***

Incidentally, concerning the magnitude of the holy phrase /bismillah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim/ and the abbreviated letters with which the suras begin, please refer to the beginning of the suras Al-Hamd, and Al-Baqarah, and to the detailed narrations discussed under them.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 2

إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

2. “Verily We have sent it down - an Arabic Qur’an - that you may understand. ”

No matter in what language the Qur’an had been revealed, other people would have had to become acquainted with that language. However, the revelation of the Qur’an in the Arabic language has several advantages, among which are the following:

A – The Arabic language has a very great capacity for word formation and has so fixed grammatical rules that cannot be easily found in any other language.

B – According to some narrations, Arabic is the language spoken in Paradise.

C – The region in which the Qur’an was revealed was an Arabic speaking region, and it was apparently impossible for the Holy Book to be revealed into any other language.

Regarding the revelation of the Qur’an, Allah (s.w.t.) has employed the word descend /nuzul/ the same word He has used for the falling of rain.

In any rate, the aim of the Qur’an is not merely reading, chanting, browsing through, or barely reciting it for blessedness. The main aim is understanding it, that kind of understanding which is comprehensive and goes deep into its meaning and encourages man to put what he reads into practice.

The indication, occurred in ten suras, to the fact that the Qur’an has been revealed in Arabic is an answer to the accusation that the holy Prophet (S) had learned it from a non Arab and that its content was an imported way of thinking, and not a revelation originated from Allah.

In the meantime, all Muslims must try to learn Arabic as a second language, for it is the language of Divine revelation and the key to understanding the holy Qur’an and Islamic knowledge.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 3

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَآ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْءَانَ وَإِن كُنْتَ مِن قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

3. “We relate unto you the best of stories, by that We have revealed to you this Qur’an; though before this, you were of those who did it not know.”

The Arabic term /qasas/ means both a story, and the telling of a story. Stories and tales play an important role in man’s education, for they depict the life of a nation and provide practical examples of an Ummah.

History is a mirror that reflects the deeds of nations and the more we are acquainted with the story of our predecessors, the more we acquire the feeling of having lived their lives.

Ali–ibn–Abitalib (as) in a letter to his son, Imam Hassan, implied that he had studied the lives of the former nations in a manner that as if he had lived with them and did it as long as their lifetimes.

Perhaps one of the reasons why stories and tales leave such a great impact upon man is because he has an inherent love for stories.

Usually, books on history, epics and myths have been successful throughout man's cultural history, and understandable for the majority of people, while issues requiring rational proofs and intellectual matters have been the concern of only a small group among them.

The Qur'an calls the story of Hadrat Yusuf the 'best of stories'. However, some narrations tell us that the entire Qur'an is also called /ahsanul qasas/ (the best of stories) and certainly, it is not incompatible with the previous definition of the Qur'an, that the Qur'an is the best among all the Holy Books, and the story of Yusuf is the best among the stories of the Qur'an.

At any rate, the story of Hadrat Yusuf is the best of stories for the following reasons:

A) It is the most relevant to our experience.

B) It deals with the struggle against one's innermost self which is the greatest of struggles.

C) The hero of the story is Hadrat Yusuf, a youth who possesses all human virtues in himself (patience, faith, piety, modesty, wisdom, trustfulness, forgiveness and kindness).

D) All persons of the story have a happy ending. For example Yusuf attains a high political position, the brothers repent, his father regains his lost sight, the famine stricken country is saved; complains and envies are converted into the full gratification of love.

There are a number of opposites juxtaposed in this story: Departure and reunion, sorrow and joy, famine and plenty, loyalty and disloyalty, proprietor and tenant; palace and hovel, poverty and needlessness or wealth, servitude and domination; blindness and sight, chastity and making false accusations.

In conclusion, these points illustrate that the Qur'an, as far as telling stories and historical narratives, has utilized the best manner to educate man. Not only the Divine stories, but all the things of Allah are also the best /ahsan/, because:

1 – He is the Best Creator.

2 – He has sent down the Best of Books.

3 – He has produced the best of features.

4 – He has the best of religions.

5 – He provides the best of rewards.

6 – And finally, having such a background, He has demanded the best of actions from man.

Thus, ignorance is mentioned in the Qur'an signified by three forms:

A- The disagreeable ignorance, like what the verse says:

"But verily many among mankind are heedless of Our Signs."[1]

B- The bearable type of ignorance and unawareness which has been referred to here:

"Verily those who accuse chaste believing women unaware (***of the evil***) ***are cursed in this world and the Hereafter..."***[2]

Meaning: Those who accuse pure and innocent women, who are unaware of fornication or adultery, are damned in this world and the next.

C- Natural ignorance like being uninformed about something, for example in this verse:

The Qur'an says:

"...though before this, you were of those who did it not know."

Meaning that before We told you this story, you were not informed about it nor had you heard it from anyone.[3]

Or, similar to the verse which says:

"...You did not know what the Book was, nor (***what***) ***the Faith*** (***was***)***..."***[4]

Surah Yusuf – Verse 4

إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لأَبِيهِ يَآ أبَتِ إِنّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَباً وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ

4. "When, Yusuf said to his father: 'O my father! Verily I did see (***dreamt***) ***eleven stars and the sun and the moon: I saw them prostrating themselves unto me'."***

A Wonderful Dream and Difficulties Lead to Victory

This Holy Surah cites the profound and guiding role of extraordinary and meaningful Yusuf's dream which herald the beginning of worldly difficulties and the inevitability of his eventual victory.

The Qur'an starts the story of Yusuf with an extraordinary and meaningful dream. This dream is, in fact

the first in a number of important episodes that had far reaching effects in the epic life of Hadrat Yusuf.

One early morning when he was still very young, Yusuf excitedly went to his father to tell him about an experience, which, although on the surface did not seem very important, nevertheless seemed too vivid and extraordinary to keep to himself.

Yusuf told his father that he had had a dream where eleven stars descended from the sky, followed by the sun and the moon and all lay prostrate before him.

The verse says:

"When, Yusuf said to his father: 'O my father! Verily I did see** (**dreamt**) **eleven stars and the sun and the moon: I saw them prostrating themselves unto me'."

According to Ibn Abbas, the famous Islamic commentator, Yusuf had this dream the night before Friday which coincides with (Laylat-ul-Qadr) the night when destinies are determined.

It is evident, of course, that the objective meaning of 'prostration' here is 'humility and modesty', else, prostration of people in the ordinary form unto sun and moon and stars is meaningless.

According to the Late 'Allamah Tabataba'i in Al-Mizan, his commentary of the Qur'an, the story of Yusuf begins with a dream which brings him good tidings and gives him hope about the future, thus enabling him to pursue a divine course with patience and perseverance.

Yusuf is the eleventh child of Hadrat Ya'qub born after Benjamin. With the exception of Benjamin, his other brothers were born from a different mother. Hadrat Ya'qub was the son of 'Is-haq who was the son of 'Ibrahim.

The Prophet (S) has been narrated who said:

"*Al-karim ibn-il-karim-ibn-il-karim, Yusuf ibn Ya'qub-ibn-'Ishaq-ibn-'Ibrahim.*"

This is:

'A noble man, the son of a noble man; Yusuf the son of Ya'qub, the son of 'Is-haq, the son of 'Ibrahim.'

The dreams of the men of Allah are of different types. Sometimes they require interpretation, like that of Hadrat Yusuf, and at other times they require no interpretation being identical with reality, like the dream of Hadrat 'Ibrahim who was ordered to sacrifice 'Isma'il.

The sublime Prophet (S) says about dreams and dreaming:

"Dreams are of three types: They are either tidings from Allah or they are sorrows from Satan, or they are composed of the daily concerns that man dreams about."

The Late ‘Allamah in his Tafsir Al–Mizan says that there are three worlds: The natural or physical world, the world of symbols or ideas, and the intellectual world.

The human spirit, because of its subjective and non material nature, can communicate with the two other worlds in the dream and, according to the level of its capacity and potentiality, it may perceive some facts.

If the spirit is perfected, it comprehends reality in a pure and translucent context. If it has not reached the final stages of perfection, the reality would present itself to soul’s consciousness clothed in different forms.

For example a lion would come to symbolize courage, a fox would mean fraudulence and a mountain could mean exaltedness in our dreams, knowledge would be presented as a light, marriage in the form of clothing and ignorance as darkness.

Those who see things in their dream are divided into three groups:

The first group comprises those who possess perfected souls which are completely detached from the material world and, after their physical senses go to sleep, they enter a relationship with the world of the intellect where they apprehend realities which they perceive from the other world.

(A somewhat relevant example is like that of a television whose antennae receive broadcast signals from far distant places from atop mountains and hills). Such dreams are received directly and are not clothed in symbolism, thus they require no interpretation.

The second group are those who are in an intermediate spiritual state, their dreams also depict reality, but they are accompanied by imagined accumulations and resemblances which require a commentator to explain and clarify the subject of the dream.

The dreams of the third group are the dreams of those whose souls are so upset and unstable that their dreams make no sense. Such dreams cannot be interpreted, for they have no relationship with reality. In the Qur’an, such dreams are regarded as /adqau ’ahlam/ ‘confused dreams’.

The Qur’an has named some dreams as those which have proven to be true and became fulfilled; as follow:

A– The dream of Hadrat Yusuf (as) regarding the prostration of eleven stars, the sun and the moon which was interpreted as his rise to power and the reverence with which his brothers and his parents would treat him.

B– The dream of the two prisoners who were companion inmates with Yusuf, that later one of whom was freed and the other was executed.

C- The dream of the Egyptian king of a fat cow being eaten by a thin one which was interpreted as the occurrence of famine and drought after affluence.

D- The dream of the Prophet of Islam (S) about the small number of pagans in the Battle of Badr which was interpreted as the defeat of the pagans at the hands of the Islamic army.

The Qur'an in this regard says:

"(Remember) when Allah showed them to you as few in your dream..."[5]

E- The dream of the Prophet of Islam (S) about the entry of the Muslims into the Masjid ul Haram with shaved heads, which was interpreted as the conquest of Mecca by the Muslims and their pilgrimage to the House of Allah.

Concerning it, the Qur'an says:

"Certainly Allah had shown to his Apostle the dream with truth;..."[6]

F- The dream of the mother of Hadrat Moses who had placed her infant in a box and cast it into the water.

The Qur'an says:

"When We revealed to your mother what was revealed;"

"Saying: 'put him into a chest, then cast it into the river..."[7]

The Islamic quotations confirm the view that the word 'revelation' in this verse signifies "dream".

G- Hadrat 'Ibrahim's dream of sacrificing of his son 'Isma'il[8] which says:

"...he said: 'O my son! Verily I have seen in a dream that I should sacrifice you..."

So, as was mentioned earlier, the Qur'an begins the story of Yusuf by narrating his extraordinary and meaningful dream, for this wonderful dream is considered the first highlight of his adventurous life.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 5

قَالَ يَابُنَيَّ لاَ تَقْصُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ عَلَي إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْداً إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِلإِنسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

5. "He (Jacob) said: 'O my (little) son! Do not relate your vision to your brothers, lest they devise a plot against you: for Satan is to man a manifest enemy'."

One of the principles of life is keeping other people's secrets. If the Muslims had put into practice what

has been implied in this verse, our vast capital and potentialities, our manuscripts and scientific works, our works of art and antique objects would not have been found in foreign museums.

Foreigners would not be spying on us under the cover of being experts, diplomats and tourists, and they would not have become aware of our resources and assets. Our naivety could not have been so easily used by their treachery to make our secrets easily available to those who are constantly ready to play dirty tricks against us.

Hadrat Yusuf (as) told his father his dream away from the presence of his brothers. This behavior shows a remarkable perceptiveness on Yusuf's part which definitely did not escape Ya'qub.

The sun, the moon and eleven stars in prostration before his son, what did it all mean? Ya'qub briefly pondered over the vision and then it became clear to him. Certainly, the moon and the sun represented Yusuf's mother and himself, and the eleven stars represented his brothers.

The dream foretold that his son's prestige and position would be so elevated that the stars in the sky, the sun and the moon will bow to kiss his threshold. He will be so exalted in rank and position that celestial beings will be subservient to him. It was a fantastic, fabulous, and interesting dream!

Therefore with a mixed feeling of anxiety and happiness, he responded his son not to tell his brothers about his dream for they would scheme dangerous stratagems against him.

The verse says:

"He (Jacob) said: 'O my (little) son! Do not relate your vision to your brothers, lest they devise a plot against you: for Satan is to man a manifest enemy'."

I know that Satan is an open enemy to man. He is looking for a pretext to start playing his dirty tricks to win him over, inciting him to envy and avarice and even entangle brothers in quarrels."

Explanations

1. It is necessary that parents be knowledgeable about the likes and dislikes as well as attitudes of their children so that they may be able to guide them effectively.

2. In order to make a sound prediction about cases, which have significant problems or sensitivities, voicing one's suspicions or fears or unveiling certain characteristics, may prove useful.

All data and information must be categorized and confidential data should be separated from none confidential ones. Do not tell everyone everything. Do not provide grounds for envy, for the envy of the brothers prepared the way for the realization of Satan's hostility towards Yusuf.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 6

وَكَذَٰلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِن تَأْوِيلِ الاَحَادِيثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَي ءَالِ يَعْقُوبَ كَمَآ أَتَمَّهَا عَلَي أَبَوَيْكَ مِن قَبْلُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

6. "And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of sayings (dreams), and perfect His favor to you and to the posterity of Jacob, even as He perfected it to your fathers Abraham and Isaac aforetime! Verily your Lord is All-knowing, All-wise."

Prophets are the appointees of Allah, and their selection is based upon Divine knowledge. The positions of prophecy and divinely guided government carry a great deal of blessings.

Interpreting dreams imply the deciphering and realization of their meanings. The Arabic term /ahadi/ is the plural of /hadi/ which means narrating an event. As man recounts his dream for others, the word /ahadi/ is also applied to dreams as well. Therefore, /ta`wil-ul-ahadi/ denotes 'the interpretation of dreams'.

Hadrat Ya'qub (as) interprets his son's dream for him in this verse, foretelling his future.
However, this wonderful dream was not merely telling the magnitude of Yusuf's position in an apparent and material sense.

It also indicated that he would attain the rank of prophecy and an elevated celestial position in the future as well, as indicated in the prostration of the celestial beings to him.

Thus, his father Ya'qub said: as follows:

"And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of sayings (dreams), and perfect His favor to you and to the posterity of Jacob, even as He perfected it to your fathers Abraham and Isaac aforetime! Verily your Lord is All-knowing, All-wise."

Among the lessons drawn from these verses is the lesson concerning keeping particular secrets which must be observed even sometimes against brothers. There are always instances of secrets in man's life which, when unveiled, may disrupt his future or endanger his society.

Therefore, refraining from divulging secrets is one of the signs of fortitude and will power of a person. In a tradition attributed to Imam Sadiq (as) we read:

"Your secrets are just like your blood which must only be circulated within your own veins."

1. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 92.
2. Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 23.
3. The verse under discussion

4. Surah Ash-Shura, No. 42, verse 52
5. Surah Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 43
6. Surah Fath, No. 48, verse 27
7. Surah Taha, No. 20, verse 38, 39
8. mentioned in Surah As-Safat, No. 37, verse 102.

Section 2: Yusuf Suffers the Treatment of His Brothers

Surah Yusuf - Verse 7

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ ءَايَاتٌ لِلسَّآئِلِينَ

7. "Certainly there are signs (of Allah's sovereignty) in (the story of) Yusuf and his brothers for the inquirers."

There are numerous signs of Allah's omnipotence at work in the life history of Hadrat Yusuf, each of which is an advice and a didactic lesson for the seeker of Truth. Among these Signs we can cite:

1. Hadrat Yusuf's very sophisticated dream.

2. The science of the interpretation of dreams.

3. Ya'qub's awareness of the future of his son.

4. Yusuf's remaining safe at the bottom of the well.

5. Becoming blind and then regaining sight.

6. From being abandoned at the bottom of a well and becoming high, exalted.

7. Being put in prison and finally to acceding power and government.

8. Being cleared off all accusations and hearing accusations of corruption.

9. Parting and reunion.

10. Servitude and accession to power.

11. Choosing prison over being polluted with sin.

12. Having the upper hand yet impelled to forgive wrong done to oneself.

Along with the above signs, there are certain questions which can be raised, the answers to which illustrate the way to a decent life:

How does man's envy lead him to fratricide?

How can ten individuals engage in a conspiracy for treason?

How does Yusuf spare punishing his criminal brothers while having the upper hand?

How man can prefer prison to pollution by sin and the pleasures of committing sin, when thinking of Allah?

This Surah was revealed when the sublime Prophet (S) was economically and socially besieged and this story provided great comfort for him.

It meant that if some of his relatives did not believe and support him, he should not have worried for the brothers of Yusuf had thrown him down a well. The most important verses of this Surah are those which deal with the domination of the Divine power over man-made conspiracies.

They threw Yusuf into the well in order to become dearer to their father but they became hated. Doors were closed in order to pollute him with sin, but his chastity and innocence were well demonstrated in this trying circumstance.

Neither did the well, servitude, prison, palace life, or any of these conspiracies exert the slightest influence on Allah's Will.

At any rate, it is from here that the entanglement of the brothers with Yusuf first starts, and didactic lessons can be gleaned from the story.

It says:

"Certainly there are signs (of Allah's sovereignty) in (the story of) Yusuf and his brothers for the inquirers."

What lesson might be more instructive than this? One finds a group of powerful individuals with well calculated strategies, through envy trying their utmost to kill a seemingly weak person.

In the end all their plans turn against them making it possible for him to be elevated to a position of influence, governing a vast territory with everyone bowing before him instead! This shows that when Allah's will is at work, His plans may be implemented by even the opponents of those plans.

This denotes that a truly faithful believer is never left alone and even if the whole world were to unite for

his extermination, he would not even suffer the slightest injury if the will of Allah does not desire such.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 8

إِذْ قَالُوا لَيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَي اَبِينَا مِنَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ أَبَانَا لَفِي ضَلالٍ مُّبِينٍ

8. "When they said: 'Verily, Yusuf and his brother** (**Benjamin**) **are dearer to our father than we, while we are a** (**strong**) **group. Verily, our father is in manifest error'."

Hadrat Ya'qub had 12 sons, two of whom (Yusuf and Benjamin) were of the same mother and the rest from another mother. Ya'qub's interest in Yusuf (because of his young age or because of his virtues) made his brothers envy him.

They not only envied him but also by saying: /wa nahnu 'usbatun/ "***while we are a** (**strong**) **group***" made it clear that they were arrogant in spirit and, because of this, they accused their father of being mistaken and deviated in his focus of affection.

The verse says:

"When they said: 'Verily, Yusuf and his brother** (**Benjamin**) **are dearer to our father than we, while we are a** (**strong**) **group. …"

Many of those who are at comparatively lower rungs of position and rank in society try to degrade those who rank higher in society in order to compensate for their own shortcomings.

There are differences between the words, discrimination and differentiation, the former implies attaching importance to someone over others for no justified reason and the latter refers to distinguishing on the basis of ones abilities and conditions.

For example, a physician's prescriptions or a teacher's marks differ since they must vary in accordance with the rules which are not of an oppressive nature. However, Yusuf's brothers considered Ya'qub's love as one that had no good reason.

Explanations

1. If the children feel that they are discriminated against, their envy will be aroused.

2. Discrimination among one's children will decrease their love towards their parents

3. The exercise of power does not engender love.

4. Envy crossed the frontiers of fatherhood and prophecy hence the brothers attributed deviation and

injustice to their father who was, at the same time, their prophet.

The above verse says:

"...Verily, our father is in manifest error'."

5. To be loved is an inherent need of man. Lack of love and affection of others is one of the greatest sufferings of man.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 9

اقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوِ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضاً يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِن بَعْدِهِ قَوْماً صَالِحِينَ

9. "Slay you Yusuf, or cast him out to some (far) land, (so that) your father's attention may be given on you (exclusively), and you may be after that (by repentance) a righteous people."

With respect to Divine favors, man has four options: to be jealous, to be stingy, to be self – sacrificing, and to be envious of others.

If he enjoys a blessing and is happy that others do not enjoy it as well, this is a case of stingy, this is also the case if he does not enjoy a blessing and is glad that others do not enjoy it as well which is jealousy.

If he lets others benefit from a blessing he enjoys and is not concerned whether he would be deprived of it in the process, this is a case of self–sacrifice. If he thinks that others enjoy a blessing and he doesn't and he wishes that he enjoys that blessing too, this is envy.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

"I sometimes express my affection towards some of my children, seating them on my lap even though they do not merit all that love, so that they do not become envious of my other children, and the adventures of Yusuf be repeated once more."[1]

The feeling of envy, however, eventually led the brothers to conspire with each other. They proposed two schemes, either to kill Yusuf or to send him off to a far distant land so that the love and attention of their father would be evenly distributed among them.

The verse says:

"Slay you Yusuf, or cast him out to some (far) land, (so that) your father's attention may be given on you (exclusively)..."

It is true that they might have trouble with their consciences having condescended to committing such a

crime against their brother. However, they thought that it might be possible to compensate for this sin and repent afterwards.

The holy verse continues saying:

"...and you may be after that (by repentance) a righteous people."

This sentence reveals the fact that they had feelings of guilt for having committed such a barbarous act and were afraid of Allah at the bottom of their hearts.

However, the important problem in question lies in the fact that discussing repentance before the commission of a sin is in actual fact a satanic strategy to cheat one's own conscience and keep a channel open with Allah, hence, the person in question is not really repenting and by no means it is a reason for his regret.

Explanations

1. Dangerous thoughts lead man to perform dangerous acts and jealousy leads man to such great sin that he will even be prepared to commit fratricide.

2. Man seeks popularity and affection, the lack of which leads to the most dangerous kinds of behaviors and deviations.

3. Although the holy Qur'an makes the acquisition of popularity and affection upon having faith and righteous conduct, Satan makes it the reward for killing one's brothers.

4. The jealous person thinks that if others are killed or removed, all the blessings will be given to him.

5. Satan, by holding out the probable possibility of future repentance, opens up the gate for man to commit sin in the present.

6. Being knowledgeable and being aware does not always imply that one has distanced him from deviation.

Despite the fact that Yusuf's brothers knew and believed that killing their brother was an evil act it did not stop them from committing it.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 10

قَالَ قَآئِلٌ مِنْهُمْ لاَ تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ وَأَلْقُوهُ فِي غَيَابَتِ الْجُبّ يَلْتَقِطْهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ إِن كُنتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ

10. "Said a speaker among them: 'Do not slay Yusuf, and if you must do it, throw him into the

bottom of the well (so that) some caravan (of travelers) may pick him up'."

The Arabic term /jubb/ means a kind of well in which stones have not been used in its construction. The word /qayabat/ also refers to a platform on the wall of a well near the water which cannot be seen from above the wall.

Among his brothers, there was one who was more intelligent and had a conscience that was superior to that of the others. He opposed the conspiracy to murder Yusuf and the plan to send him into exile to a far distant land, as there was the fear that he might die in the process.

He offered another contingency plan suggesting that they should not kill Yusuf, but put him down a well in such a way as to leave him in safety, which would enable travelers, passing by in their caravans to pick him up and take him with them, thus putting a distance between him and themselves and from the eyes of their father.

The verse says:

"Said a speaker among them: 'Do not slay Yusuf, and if you must do it, throw him into the bottom of the well (so that) some caravan (of travelers) may pick him up'."

Another important lesson drawn from this story is how a man's jealousy can provide him with ways of entangling himself in very serious problems, and how, if this outrageous feeling is not controlled, it would involve not only oneself but others as well.

It is for this very reason that in Islamic traditions various ways and techniques have been suggested to fight this abhorrent evil. Here are some examples:

The Prophet (S) has been quoted who said:

"Allah dissuaded Musa Ibn Imran from being jealous, saying to him: 'The jealous person is furious about the blessings I have bestowed upon My servants and hinders the distribution of those shares which I have allocated for My servants. He who does so does not belong to Me nor do I belong to him'."

And a tradition quoted from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"The faithful may be envious but are never jealous. However, a hypocrite exhibits his jealousy but does not envy."

This part of the story teaches us that parents should be extraordinarily vigilant as to how they express affection towards their children, for it sometimes happens that a simple expression of love towards one child can create such an inferiority complex in another that it would incite him to engage in all kinds of ill conduct.

The other child could feel so intensively rejected that he would be ready to assassinate his brother's

character, not recognizing any kind of boundary.

Even if he is not in a position to show the appropriate reaction, he would keep all his troubles to himself, blaming himself inwardly, which can contribute to the occurrence of mental problems.

Some Traditions Concerning Jealousy

1) The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"Do not be jealous, do not perform acts of hostility, do not back-bite or gossip, stay as Allah's sheep, and act in a brotherly manner towards each other." 2

2) Also, he (S) said:

"The only thing which I am most afraid of about my Ummah is the multiplication of wealth, for people will become jealous and consequently kill each other." 3

3) The holy Prophet (S) told his companions one day:

*"Beware that the disease of the former nations has afflicted you. That disease is jealousy which does not wipe out the hair, but it can make one lose his religion."*4

4) Ali (as) said:

*"A jealous person is always in discomfort and pain, even though his body may be healthy."*5

5) Ali (as) also said:

*"Remove jealousy from your heart for jealousy is an exhausting and exasperating disease."*6

6) Amir ul Mu'minin Ali (as) said:

*"Jealousy is the worst of diseases."*7

7) Ali (as) said:

"Stop being jealous and stop bearing grudges for they disrupt one's religion and bring man to destruction".

8) Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*"Be in awe of Allah and do not feel jealous of one another."*8

9) Ali (as) said:

*"Jealousy makes one's life bitter and dark."*9

10) Amir ul Mu'minin Ali (as) in a Tradition said:

"Jealousy is a cureless disease which will not disappear except with the annihilation of the jealous person or when the one of whom others are jealous has passed away."[10]

11) Ali (as) said:

"The misfortunes of this world and the next is a consequence of one's jealousy."[11]

12) Amir ul M'uminin Ali (as) said:

"The faithful will neither do flatter nor is jealous, save when they are seeking knowledge."[12]

13) Imam Sadiq (as) quoting his father, said:

"A man who has stinginess, jealousy and fear within him is not a faithful believer."[13]

14) Imam Sadiq (as) has been quoted as saying:

"Jealousy wears away one's faith the same way as fire consumes wood."[14]

Surah Yusuf - Verses 11 - 12

قَالُوا يَآ أَبَانَا مَالَكَ لاَ تَأْمَنَّا عَلَي يُوسُفَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَنَاصِحُونَ

أَرْسِلْهُ مَعَنَا غَدَاً يَرْتَعْ وَيَلْعَبْ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

11. "They said: 'O our father! What cause is with you that you do not trust us with Yusuf, and verily we are his sincere well-wishers?'"
12. "Send him with us tomorrow to enjoy himself and play, and verily we shall take every care of him."

Jealousy makes one commit such sins as lying and playing dirty tricks even upon the most favorite of one's kin. After they had agreed on the final plot to throw him into the well, the brothers fell to thinking about how to separate Yusuf from his father.

They came up with another idea. They came to their father, disguising their true intentions on their faces, and with an innocent tone of voice, they told him why he did not temporarily separate himself from Yusuf, and let him be with them instead. They inquired why Jacob did not trust them with Yusuf to look after their little brother.

The verse says:

"They said: 'O our father! What cause is with you that you do not trust us with Yusuf, and verily we are his sincere well-wishers?'"

Yusuf's brothers urged the father to send the young boy with them to take him outside the town to play and to take benefit of the fresh air and fruits there. They also mentioned that they would take care of him.

The verse says:

"Send him with us tomorrow to enjoy himself and play, and verily we shall take every care of him."

The father was put in an awkward position; if he refused their suggestion, it would make his secret distrust of the brothers public. On the other hand, Yusuf was attracted by the idea of going out for the recreation and excitement outside the town.

Points to Note

Man needs recreation and exercise, and, as one notices in this verse, the strongest argument which persuaded Ya'qub to submit to the wishes of his children, was that Yusuf needed recreation.

It is mentioned in the Islamic narrations that the believer must allocate a certain period for recreation so that he would be able to succeed in his other affairs.[15] Therefore, recreation and healthy sports are not only allowable in Islam, but they are also highly recommended.

However, the enemies of Allah in the past, present and in the future, seek to deviate recreation and sports from their healthy role and separate the youth from their true objectives. Thus, the youth take sports too seriously regarding something recreational as a serious competitive matter, consuming energies that could be put to better and more creative use.

Worldly oppressors and plot makers not only misuse sports, but also under any other agreeable and acceptable subject, they always pursue their evil aims. With the name of diplomat, they send the most dangerous spies to different countries.

Under the title of military consolers, they plot and obtain the military secrets. By the name of human's rights, they support their hired patrons. With the excuse of medicine, they send arms for their supporters, and so on.

Surah Yusuf – Verses 13 – 14

قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَن تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَخَافُ أَن يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَأَنتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ

قَالُوا لَئِنْ أَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّآ إِذاً لَخَاسِرُونَ

13. "He said: 'Verily it saddens me that you should take him away, and I fear lest the wolf devour him while you are heedless of him'."
14. "They said: 'If the wolf were to devour him while we are a (strong) group, then we should be losers'."

The father was aware of his children's jealousy and this was why he told Yusuf that he should not recount his dream to his brothers. However Jacob (as) did not make any mention of their jealousy, on the contrary, he raised the issue of the wolf and their probable neglect of Yusuf as a pretext.

Therefore, in response to their suggestions and without accusing them of any possible wrong doing, he said that he would be saddened if they took him with them, because in the surrounding area there might be fierce wolves, which might probably attack and eat his son while they might be busy having fun, and neglect him.

The verse says:

"He said: 'Verily it saddens me that you should take him away, and I fear lest the wolf devour him while you are heedless of him'."

Certainly, the brothers had no clear answer for the first reason which their father had given, for Yusuf's departure was such a sorrowful event to the father that they could not compensate by any means.

It is quite possible that this statement might have enflamed their jealousy even more.

On the other hand, the father's answer, from a different perspective, indicated that eventually a child had to be separated from his father for the sake of his own development.

They could not and did not give an answer to the first reason, instead. They focused their attention on the second reason which was more important to their plans.

They said that they were a powerful group, and it would be they who would be at a disadvantage if a wolf had attacked him, because the wolf would have to eat them first, therefore, this could never happen.

In other words, they were never going to allow wolves to eat any of their brothers and sit by and watch such a thing happen. At any rate, they made their father submit to their demand through playing all kinds of tricks and getting Yusuf excited about going by emphasizing the fun he would have.

The verse says:

"They said: 'If the wolf were to devour him while we are a (strong) group, then we should be losers'."

It is interesting to note that just as Yusuf's brothers utilized his inherent interest in recreation in order to achieve their objectives, the enemies of truth and justice also try to employ sports and recreation to poison the thinking of the new generation.

We must guard ourselves against those evil plots which the wolf–like superpowers employ under the guise of recreational activities for the youth.

Outstanding Points

Give your children independence.

1– The paternal affection unto the child and defending him against probable dangers are two principles, but the child's independence is also another principle.

2– A lie must be avoided to be suggested because people may misuse it.

The Prophet (S) said:

"Do not suggest a lie and do not open the way of pretext for lying."

In Majma'–ul–Bayan, it says that Ya'qub feared that the brothers might kill him though he did not say this directly. He referred to them metaphorically as wolves, for he had dreamed that wolves had attacked Yusuf.

When Ya'qub had mentioned the word "wolves" it occurred to them to use this as an excuse for their crime. The lesson here is that one should be careful not to make it easy for others to misuse our words and actions.

The Arabic word /'usbah/ refers to a strong united group, and they protect each other on this basis.

Sometimes grown people become disconcerted in the face of danger, but the youth are proud of their strength and do not take danger seriously: /wa nahnu 'usbatun/. While the father was anxious, the children were proud of their strength.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 15

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَجْمَعُوا أَن يَجْعَلُوهُ فِي غَيَابَتِ الْجُبِّ وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُم بِأَمْرِهِمْ هَذَا وَهُمْ لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ

15. "So when they did take him with them, and they agreed to put him in the bottom of the well, and We revealed unto him: 'You will certainly inform them of this deed of theirs while they know (you) not'."

At the sensitive times, Allah's help comes unto the saints of Allah. The best means of calmness for Yusuf, when he was at the bottom of well, was Allah's inspiration due to his bright future and his deliverance.

The brothers had gone to sleep that night, confident that their plot would go according to their plan the following day. Their only anxiety was that their father might rue, and reverse his saying.

The next morning they went to their father and he entrusted Yusuf to their care giving them advice on how they should take care of their little brother. They expressed their appreciation for the advice and, taking him up gently and respectfully in front of their father, set off with Yusuf.

It is said that the father escorted them to the gates of the town and held Yusuf for the last time, embracing him while drops of tears rolled down his cheeks. Then he deposited him in their care and departed with a sorrowful heart.

As long as they were in sight of Jacob, they would fondle and caress Yusuf, pretending that they really cared for him. But when they were out of sight of their father, they began beating and kicking him, showing their true colors and jealousy of the little innocent boy. He implored the protection of one brother from the other, but all were of one cruel mind.[16]

In one narration it is said that when Yusuf was crying during their mistreatment of him or when they were about to throw him into the well, he suddenly started laughing to his brothers' astonishment.

Then he manifested the secret of this laughter and taught then a great lesson when he said:

"I shall never forget that once I used to be happy to look at you, my powerful brothers with strong arms and extraordinary bodily strength. I used to say to myself that I had no reason to worry about anything when I had so many powerful companions to rely on.

I was then sure of your protection and confident in your support. Now, I am at your mercy, while I am being maltreated by you I am seeking the protection of each you from the other and none of you may give me any support.

Allah has taught me the lesson that I must not rely upon anyone except Him alone."

At any rate, the Qur'an says that they unanimously agreed to throw him into the well and before this they inflicted as much tyranny and cruelty on him as was possible. It says:

"So when they did take him with them, and they agreed to put him in the bottom of the well…"

To console him, it was revealed to Yusuf that he should not grieve for a day would come when he would make them all aware of their evil designs while they did not recognize him.

That was not a Divine revelation revealed as a prophet's revelation, but it was an aspiration to the heart

of Yusuf. It was for Yusuf to know that he was not alone and that he had guardians who took care of him. This revelation shone the light of peace and hope on his heart, expelling the darkness of frustration and despair from his soul.

The verse says:

"...and We revealed unto him: 'You will certainly inform them of this deed of theirs while they know* (*you*) *not'."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 16

وَجَآءُوا أَبَاهُمْ عِشَآءً يَبْكُونَ

16. "And they came to their father at nightfall, weeping."

Crying is not always sincere nor a sign of honesty. Do not trust every type of crying and weeping.

Conspirators do not neglect to take into consideration the role of feelings and timing.

Yusuf's brothers had executed their plot flawlessly as they had planned and desired against him. Now, they had to think about their return, their father's questions and how to make him believe their lies.

The lie they cooked up, which we will see later on in the commentary on the next verse, was the very same fear which their father had expressed and predicted, proclaiming that Yusuf was eaten by wolves.

The Qur'an says that the brothers went to their father at night, crying. This kind of crying is deceiving and pretentious which shows us that someone might cry without a valid and honest reason and therefore we cannot conclude that someone is in trouble simply by looking at the tears in his eyes.

The verse says:

"And they came to their father at nightfall, weeping."

There are four types of weeping in the Qur'an:

1- The tears shed out of joy: Some Christians, when listening to the chanting of the Qur'an used to shed tears.

The Qur'an says:

"And when they hear what has been sent down to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they recognize of the Truth..."[17]

2– The tears shed out of sorrow: For example, when some Muslims heard that it was not possible for them to join the advance forces of the army of the Sublime Prophet (S), they shed tears.

The Qur'an says:

"...and their eyes overflowed with tears of sorrow, for they did not find that which they should spend." [18]

3– The tears shed out of fear: For example, whenever certain verses of the Qur'an were read to the men of Allah, they would fall in prostration and cry.

"...When the revelations of the Beneficent (Allah) were recited unto them, they fell down prostrating and weeping."[19]

In another occurrence the Qur'an says:

"And they fall down on their faces weeping, and it adds to their humility."[20]

4– Tears shed to deceive and mislead: An example of this is reflected in Yusuf's brothers coming to Ya'qub, in tears, to try to falsely prove and convince him that a wolf had torn apart the body of their brother.

"...Weeping."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 17

قَالُوا يَآ أَبَانَآ إِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ وَتَرَكْنَا يُوسُفَ عِندَ مَتَاعِنَا فَأَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَمَآ أَنتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَنَا وَلَوْ كُنَّا صَادِقِينَ

17. "They said: 'O' our father! Verily we went off racing and left Yusuf with our things; then the wolf devoured him. But thou will never believe us even though we be truthful'."

The brothers told three consecutive lies to justify their fault. They said they had gone tracing; they left Yusuf with their things and a wolf devoured him.

Waiting impatiently to receive his beloved son, the father was struck with fear and concern on seeing them return without Yusuf, he was afraid that his worst fears had been realized. Naturally, Ya'qub asked them why Yusuf had not returned with them.

They said that they had gone racing (horse–riding and the like) and since Yusuf was too young and could not participate, they left him with their belongings. They were so occupied with racing that they forgot about everything else, even their younger brother whom they had left looking after their things. It was at that time that the vicious wolf came and tore him apart.

The verse says:

"They said: 'O' our father! Verily we went off racing and left Yusuf with our things; then the wolf devoured him..."

This was the truth of the matter they said, but, they told their father that he would never believe them, because Jacob had already predicted such a thing would happen, and thus he might regard their claims as a pretext.

The verse says:

"...But thou will never believe us even though we be truthful'."

To explain Yusuf's absence, as it was referred at the beginning, the brothers told three consecutive lies: They left Yusuf with their belongings, they went off to race with each other, and the wolf came and ate him.

Traditions upon Lie

There are numerous Islamic traditions about lying, a few of which are listed below:

1) Imam Rida (as) said:

"Keep away from major sins, which consist of: Killing someone the shedding of whose blood is forbidden, fornication, theft, lying, arrogance and extravagance."[21]

2) It is narrated from Allah's Prophet (S) who said:

"Abstain from lying for it seduces (man) to commit sins which in turn lead him to Hellfire."[22]

3) Imam Hasan 'Askari (as) has been quoted to have said:

"All corruptions are assembled in one house, the key of which is lying"[23].

That is, man's lying leads him to commit other sins.

4) The sublime Prophet told Abuthar Ghaffari:

"O' Abuthar! Woe be unto him who tells lies in order to make others laugh! Woe be unto him! Woe be unto him! Woe be unto him! Woe be unto him!"[24]

5) Imam Sadiq (as) has been narrated who said:

"Allah's Prophet (S) said: 'The worst type of quotation is quoting a lie'."[25]

6) Ali (as) has said:

"The end of telling a lie is self–blame and feeling sorry for oneself."[26]

7) The sublime Prophet (S) said to Ali (as):

"O Ali! Abstain from lying, for it brings shame. Then one would be reported as a liar to Allah."[27]

8) The holy Prophet (S) remarked:

"He who bears false witness against a Muslim or the person sheltered by Islam, or an individual in the society, would be hanged by his tongue on the Day of Resurrection, and would be cast along with the hypocrites into the lowest level of Hell." [28]

9) Ali (as) said:

"The consequence of lying is meanness in this world and torment in the Hereafter."[29]

10) The sublime Prophet (S) said:

"Lying is one of the gateways to hypocrisy."[30]

Surah Yusuf – Verse 18

وَجَآءُوا عَلَي قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْراً فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَي مَاتَصِفُونَ

18. "And they brought his shirt with false blood on it. He said: 'No, your (guilty) selves have made a matter light for you. (For me) patience is good; and Allah is He Whose help is to be sought against what you describe'."

Patience for Allah's determinations is good. But how is it good that one has to keep his patience in a situation where cruelty has been inflicted upon an innocent child, when Jacob says:

"for me patience is good"?

An Answer to the Question

First, Ya'qub knew that Yusuf was still alive, because he knew this fact through revelation.

Secondly, if he behaved differently, he might have made them more suspicious and they might then rush back to the hiding place, the well, and kill the little boy.

The third point is that one should not act in such a way as to obstruct another's way to repentance, even if that person is as cruel as those brothers were.

They brought Yusuf's shirt to him, stained with false blood to prove that he was killed.

However, as liars have poor memories, they had been neglectful to tear the shirt apart in several places at least as would have been the case if he had been really attacked by a wolf. They had simply taken it off and brought it to him.

Ya'qub was quite a perceptive and experienced man; he took one look at the shirt and understood that the whole story had been made up. He bluntly told them that they were lying, that their selfish and egoistic passions had put them up to doing such a satanic and dreadful deed.

The verse says:

"And they brought his shirt with false blood on it. He said: 'No, your** (**guilty**) **selves have made a matter light for you…"

In some narrations we read that he took the shirt and turned it inside out and asked:

"Why is it that I do not see any traces of the wolf's teeth and claws on it?"

According to another narration, he took the shirt and covered his face with it and while he was weeping, he said:

"What kind of wolf was it that had eaten up my son but did not do any damage to his shirt?"

Then he lost consciousness and fell to the ground like a dry piece of wood. Until late at night when the cold breeze of midnight caused him to recover his senses.

Although he felt the burning anguish of the loss of his son at the bottom of his heart, he never uttered a single word of ingratitude towards Allah. Instead he said he would wait patiently, with the kind of patience that was beautiful and rely upon Allah.

The verse continues saying:

"…** (**For me**) **patience is good;…"

The hearts of the men of Allah are centers of compassion and it is not surprising that when he separated from his son Ya'qub shed abundant tears for him which is natural. Nevertheless, despite his emotional distress, he did not lose his self control, and did not say anything against the consent of Allah.

Then Jacob remarked that he would ask Allah to help him for what they said and he would seek Him to give him more ability so that he could stand firm in front of that terrible storm and not to lose his self–control and not to pollute his tongue with any improper word. The verse in this regard says:

"…and Allah is He Whose help is to be sought against what you describe'."

Explanations

1- The best type of patience is that in which, despite one's profound sorrow and ardent yearning, one does not forget Allah and relies upon Divine assistance.

2- Satan, as well as the despotic soul, may present sin as something attractive to man and provide a justification for him to commit that sin.

3- Do not be duped by the deceptive pretensions of people. Ya'qub did not let himself be fooled by Yusuf's blood–stained shirt and his brothers' tears, rather he said:

"No, your (guilty) selves have made a matter light for you."

4- Imam Sadiq (as) has been quoted as saying that when Yusuf was thrown down the well, Gabriel came to him and said:

"What are you doing here?"

He answered:

"My brothers have thrown me down this well."

Gabriel asked:

"Do you want to be saved from the well?"

He answered:

"It is Allah Who will take me out if He wishes."

He said:

"Your Lord has commanded that you recite this prayer, and you get out."

He asked:

"What prayer?"

He answered:

"Say: O' Allah: I ask You Whose is all praise, and there is no god but You; You are the bestower of blessings (upon Your servants), the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the Owner of Glory and Benevolence. I ask You to send Your blessings upon Muhammad and his descendents and appoint the wherewithal for me to be saved from the plight I am in."

However, as soon as a caravan of camels arrived, Yusuf was rescued from the well.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 19

وَجَآءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ فَاَرْسَلُوا وَارِدَهُمْ فَاَدْلَي دَلْوَهُ قَالَ يَا بُشْرَي هَذَا غُلامٌ وَاَسَرُّوهُ بِضَاعَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ

19. "Then there came a caravan (***of travelers***)***. They sent their water-drawer*** (***for water***) ***and he let down his bucket. He said: 'O' good news! This is a youth.' So they hid him as a merchandise; while Allah is aware of what they do."***

Allah never leaves his sincere servants alone and saves them whenever they are entangled in hardships. He guided Noah to safety on the surface of water, he rescued Yunus from underneath the water, and He rescued Yusuf from the bottom of the well, the same way He saved 'Ibrahim from within the fire.

He guided Moses to safety through the middle of the sea, He protected Muhammad (S) in the cave, and Ali (as) during the night fixed for the execution of the conspiracy (Laylat-ul-Mabit), when he slept in place of the Prophet (S).

Whenever Allah wills, He acts and it is without the consent of man.

For instance, Hadrat Musa (as) went to fetch a fire, and returned with prophetic revelations. The caravan also went to draw water to replenish their supply, in the process they saved Yusuf and returned with him.

Due to Allah's will, the ropes became a means for Yusuf to climb up from the bottom of the well and ascend the throne. From this one should heed the things that can happen through the rope of Allah.

When those near to one do not provide the support needed, Allah provides that support using others. His brothers abandoned him, but a caravan of strangers arrived and gave him help.

Yusuf had a hard time down there at the bottom of the well in that terrible darkness, but his faith in Allah and the peace and comfort, which that faith provided, gave him a ray of hope that made him tolerate that awful loneliness and thus remain unshaken throughout the ordeal.

Allah knows how many days passed after this event, however, a caravan arrived and stopped there to draw water, a primary need for the caravan in that arid climate.

They sent the man responsible for maintaining their water supplies to get the water and he let his bucket down the well with a rope. From the bottom of the well Yusuf saw the bucket with the rope coming down rapidly towards him, he seized this Divine opportunity and clung to the rope.

The verse says:

"Then there came a caravan (***of travelers***)***. They sent their water-drawer*** (***for water***) ***and he let***

down his bucket…"

The water–carrier felt his bucket over weighted and quickly hauled it up. As soon as he brought it up, his eyes fell upon a handsome little boy. He exclaimed: "***Good tidings***," instead of water, it was a beautiful boy.

Some members of the caravan also took note but hid the news from the others in order to sell the boy as a slave in Egypt. They said that that beautiful boy was given by the owner of the well in order that they could sell him as a merchandise in Egypt. But Allah was well aware of what they were doing.

The verse continues saying:

"…He said: 'O' good news! This is a youth.' So they hid him as a merchandise; while Allah is aware of what they do."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 20

وَشَرَوْهُ بِثَمَنٍ بَخْسٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُودَةٍ وَكَانُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الزَّاهِدِينَ

20. "And they sold him for a small price, of a few dirhams counted out, and in him they had no interest."

They sold Yusuf cheap, for a few dirhams. This is not so surprising, for a common rule among thieves, or those who underhandedly acquire a valuable property, is to promptly sell their easily gotten merchandise usually quickly, for the fear that others may become aware and apprehend them.

The verse says:

"And they sold him for a small price, of a few dirhams counted out…"

Naturally, when someone intends to sell something in a hurry, he cannot obtain a fair price for his goods.

At the end of the verse Allah says:

"…and in him they had no interest."

1. Bihar ul 'Anwar, vol. 14, p. 78.
2. Majmu'ah Warram, p. 81.
3. Mahjjat ul Bayda', vol. 5, p. 326.
4. Bihar ul–'Anwar, vol. 70, p. 253.
5. Mustadrak ul Wasa'il vol. 2 p. 328.
6. Ibid
7. Ghurar ul Hikam, vol. 1, P. 15
8. Safinat ul Bihar, vol. 1, p. 251.

9. Mastadrak-ul-Wasa’il, vol.2, p.328
10. Ghurar ul Hikam, vol. 1, p. 79.
11. Mastadrak-ul-Wasa’il, vol.2, p.328
12. Tuhaf ul ‘Uqul, p. 928.
13. Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 1, p. 251
14. Ibid
15. Hikmat 390, Nahjul Balaqah.
16. Majma‘-ul-Bayan
17. Surah Al-Ma`idah, No. 5, verse 83.
18. Surah Al-Taubah, No. 9, verse 92.
19. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 58.
20. Surah Al-Isra’, No. 17, verse 109
21. Uyun ’Akhbar ul-Riza, vol. 2, p.137.
22. Mustdrak-ul-wasael , vol.2 , p.100.
23. Bihar ul ’Anwar , vol. 72 , p.263.
24. Makarim al Akhlaq, p.47.
25. Bihar ul Anwar, vol.72 , p.259.
26. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol.4 , p.363.
27. Bihar al Anwar , vol.77, p.67.
28. Wasa`il al Shia , vol.18, p.237, hadith 6.
29. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 3, p. 332
30. Majmu‘at ul-Warram , vol.1 , p.113.

Section 3: Yusuf’s Firmness in Piety Against the Great Temptation

Surah Yusuf - Verse 21

وَقَالَ الَّذِي اشْتَرَاهُ مِن مِصْرَ لإِمْرَأَتِهِ أَكْرِمِي مَثْوَاهُ عَسَي أَن يَنفَعَنَآ أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَداً وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلِنُعَلّمَهُ مِن تَأْوِيلِ الاَحَادِيثِ وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَي أَمْرِهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

21. “And he of Egypt who bought him said to his wife: ‘Receive him honorably, maybe he will profit us, or we shall adopt him as a son.’ Thus did We establish Yusuf in the land, and that We might teach him the interpretation of tales (dreams). And Allah is predominant over His affair; but most people do not know.”

The adventurous story of Yusuf and his brothers, which culminated in them throwing him down the bottom of the well, came to an end and a new chapter in the life of this small boy began in Egypt.

Yusuf was eventually taken to Egypt and, according to the usual procedure, he was put up for sale. Evidently he was seen as a valuable piece of property and was sold to the ‘Aziz (the Great One) of Egypt who enjoyed a high rank in the Pharaoh’s court, very much like the position of Prime Minister today.

The holy Qur’an implies that the ‘Aziz of Egypt, who had bought him, told his wife to receive Yusuf honorably and not treat him as a slave for he might be useful to them or else they could adopt him as their son.

It says:

“And he of Egypt who bought him said to his wife: ‘Receive him honorably, maybe he will profit us, or we shall adopt him as a son.’...”

One can conclude from this sentence that the ‘Aziz had no children and aspired to have one. As soon as his eyes fell upon the beautiful and dignified boy, he was immediately attracted to him and thought that he could fill the role of a son for him.

Then the Qur’an in this holy verse continues saying:

“...Thus did We establish Yusuf in the land...”

After that, the verse also adds that this opportunity was made available in order to teach him the interpretation of tales. It says:

“...and that We might teach him the interpretation of tales (dreams)...”

The “***interpretation of tales***” here signifies the art of interpreting dreams through which Yusuf could have access to any important secret of the future.

At the end of the verse, the Qur’an says:

“...And Allah is predominant over His affair; but most people do not know.”

Surah Yusuf - Verse 22

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ ءَاتَيْنَاهُ حُكْماً وَعِلْماً وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

22. “And when he reached his prime (maturity), We gave him wisdom and knowledge. And thus do We reward the doers of good.”

The Arabic term /ašudda/ is derived from /šadd/ meaning a firm knot which, in this verse, denotes bodily and spiritual development. This word is also sometimes used in the Qur’an to mean maturity, as in verse

34 of the Surah Al 'Isra', No. 17 which says:

"Do not approach the orphan's property until he attains his maturity…".

Sometimes, the term is used to mean attaining the age of forty as in verse 15 of the Surah Al Ahqaf No. 46 where it says:

"…until when he attains his maturity and reaches forty years…"

Sometimes it refers to the peak of one's development and strength before old age as in verse 67 in Surah Ghafir No. 40 The Qur'an says:

"…then He brings you forth as a child, then that you may attain your maturity, then that you may be old…"

Gradually Yusuf became acquainted with the problems besetting this new environment which was in fact an important political center of Egypt.

On the one hand, he would notice the fabulous palaces of the Egyptian aristocracy with their unlimited wealth, and on the other, the misery of the slave market and the suffering imposed upon the common people.

At the same time he was engaged in self–actualization and purification of his soul. The Qur'an implies that Allah gave Yusuf wisdom and knowledge.

The verse says:

"And when he reached his prime (maturity), We gave him wisdom and knowledge…"

The purpose of employing the words /hukman wa 'ilma/ (wisdom and knowledge), in the above verse, is that Allah had bestowed the rank of prophecy upon Yusuf as soon as he had developed physically and spiritually.

His physical maturity was crowned by the gift of /hukm/wisdom, understanding, and the power of correct discrimination which is free of egoistic influences and mistakes. The term 'knowledge' is employed here to mean the awareness which is associated with wisdom.

The gifts of "hukm" and "'ilm" were two valuable Divine favors which were bestowed upon Yusuf for his virtue, patience, righteousness, and trust, since those sincere believers who can control their restive desires in the field of struggle of soul are divinely given some merits out of knowledge and sciences which are far beyond any material criteria.

The verse continues saying:

"...And thus do We reward the doers of good."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 23

وَرَاوَدَتْهُ الَّتِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَن نَفْسِهِ وَغَلَّقَتِ الأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ إِنَّهُ لاَ يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ

23. "And the woman, in whose house he was, sought to seduce him from his self and she closed the doors and said: 'Come here'. He said 'I seek refuge in Allah! Verily He is my Lord. He made good my abode. Verily the unjust do not prosper'."

Two possibilities have been advanced for the interpretation of the Qur'anic phrase: /'innahu rabbi 'ahsana mawaya/ (verily He is my Lord. He made good my abode).

A– It is the Almighty, my Lord, Who has honored my position and I seek refuge in Him.

B– The 'Aziz is my lord who has honored me as his guest and he told you about me to give me a good abode, and I will not betray him.

Both possibilities have their own advocates which they support with their own documentations.

We are of the opinion that the first theory is more acceptable, for Yusuf did not commit sin because of his Divinely bestowed virtue, and not simply because he was staying in the palace of 'Aziz and that being indebted to him, he could not violate the wife of 'Aziz.

Such a scenario requires much less virtue that that required for the fear of Allah. Certainly, we see allusions made several times to the word /rabbika/ in this Surah which refers to the 'Aziz. However, the use of the term /rabbi/, which is used in this sentence refers to Allah.

Moreover, it is not in consonance with Yusuf's position and character to lower himself to such an extent to call the 'Aziz /rabbi/ "my lord".

Not only had Yusuf attracted the 'Aziz to himself with his Divine beauty and conduct, but he had also completely conquered the heart of his wife, Zulaykha, as well. With the passage of time, her love for him grew to great heights but Yusuf, who was righteous and self–abstaining, thought of no one but Allah, and his heart was always filled with the love of Allah.

Other factors also helped to inflame Zulaykha's burning desire for him.

On the one hand, she was childless and lived a luxurious and aristocratic life, and on the other hand, she had no domestic conflicts or problems in her life which left her with ample time to engage in fantasy and plan schemes.

Her weak faith and lack of ethical virtues left her in the grip of her satanic lust and passions which eventually led her to decide to take action in order to realize the pleasure she was seeking.

So, to obtain her wish and reaching her aim, she applied all means and methods she could. By asking and requesting him, she tried to gain his heart and make him agree, as the Qur'an says:

"And the woman in whose house he was, sought, to seduce him from his self..."

Finally, it came to her one day to entrap him in a secluded place in the house. She used every possible means to tempt and excite him, putting on the most attractive clothing, make up and the best scented perfumes. She set the scene so that to bring Yusuf to his knees.

The Qur'an says that she locked all the doors securely, telling him to come and take her. The verse says:

"...and she closed the doors and said: 'Come here.'..."

Here was this very attractive woman, alone with him in a locked room, with no one else aware of what was going on. Or so she thought that, by this circumstance, she might make him understand that no one was able to penetrate into inside and he would not be worry.

Yusuf saw the whole thing was wrong and sinful from the beginning, he was trapped, it seemed that he had no other option open to him. To her insistent demands, when all seemed lost, he simply replied,

"I seek refuge in Allah."

By saying this he both confessed to the oneness of Allah, and to the practical aspect of this belief. All things being equal, how could he possibly have submitted to such a request, while he was still living in the house of the 'Aziz and eating from his generous pocket, and who provided him with many favors regarding him in great esteem?

The verse says:

"...Verily He is my Lord. He made good my abode..."

Yusuf continues saying whether that was not a manifest injustice and a treachery and certainly the unjust will not be prosperous.

The verse says:

"...Verily the unjust do not prosper."

Messages

1. Do not leave young men alone in the houses where there are forbidden women who are not virtuous, since the situation may result in a passionate involvement with each other.

2. Capital sins first begin gradually with lax rules of social intercourse and free association. Therefore, shun association between forbidden men and women in secluded places as it paves the way for sinful behavior.

3. The sin of adultery has been established as a sin throughout history, and it was for this reason that Zulaykha securely fastened all the doors to the room.

4. The best kind of Islamic virtue is to keep oneself from committing sin for the sake of the favor, affection and right of Allah, and not because of the fear of scandal in this world or out of the fear of Hell Fire in the Hereafter.

5. Every door might often be closed but the door for those seeking shelter with Allah always remains open.

6. Keeping Allah in mind is a factor that hinders us from committing sin and error.

7. Adultery, fornication and conspiring against innocent youth are considered as tyranny against oneself, one's own spouse and the members of society.

8. One must not obey any authority of any rank if it orders us to commit sins, because the immaculate Imam (as) said:

"Do not obey a created (man) in disobeying the Creator."[1]

9. One moment's sin puts a great distance between man and salvation.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 24

وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلآ أَن رَءَا بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَآءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ

24. "And indeed she desired him, and he would have desired her if he had not seen the evidence of his Lord. Thus (it was) that We turned away from him evil and indecency. Verily he was (one) of Our chosen servants, (sincere and purified)."

Imam Sadiq (as) has said that /burhanu rabbi/ (a Sign from my Lord), is identical with the light of knowledge, certainty and wisdom which Allah has said in a phrase of the previous verses:

“We gave him wisdom and knowledge” and whatever has been mentioned in some narrations which claim that the “***Sign from his Lord***” means his witnessing the face of his father or that of Gabriel does not have a firm chain of transmission.

At any rate, if Divine assistance is absent, everyone is liable to commit mistakes. However, Allah protects His sincere subjects.

The incident with the wife of the ‘Aziz is a very sensitive issue. The holy Qur’an indicates her powerful sensuality and attractiveness when it says that she was about to seduce him and had it not been for Allah’s evidence which Yusuf had noticed, he would have fallen into her arms.

The verse says:

“And indeed she desired him, and he would have desired her if he had not seen the evidence of his Lord…”

Yusuf was a young man and not yet married, and he was confronting an extremely exciting sexual situation for the first time, with all these frailties he would have succumbed and given in, had it not been for the sake of Allah’s evidence.

That is, had it not been for Allah’s evidence, which means the essence of faith, piety, training, and, finally, the rank of inerrancy, it seems that he would have succumbed to the temptation despite his core of faith, virtue and chastity.

This interpretation has been concisely expressed in a noble narration from Imam Rida (as) where Ma’mun, the Abbasid caliph, asked the Imam:

“Aren’t you one who believes that the prophets are immaculate?”

He answered:

“Yes”.

Then Ma’mun asked:

“Then what is the interpretation of this Qur’anic verse, which says:

“And indeed she desired him, and he would have desired her if he had not seen the evidence of his Lord…”

The Imam (as) answered:

“The wife of the ‘Aziz decided to gratify her desire with Yusuf and were it not for the evidence of Allah which Yusuf witnessed, he would also have decided the same way she had decided.

However, he was an immaculate person and such a person never intends to commit sin and never seeks to engage in sinful acts.[2]

Ma'mun said:

"Well done O 'Abul Hassan!"

Let us turn to the commentary of the rest of the verse. The Glorious Qur'an implies that Allah (s.w.t.) showed Yusuf His evidence in order to divert him from evil and indecency, for he was one of His sincere and purified servants.

The verse says:

"...Thus (it was) that We turned away from him evil and indecency..."

The reason for this was, as Allah says, that:

"...Verily he was (one) of Our chosen servants, (sincere and purified)."

In this verse, allusion is made to the fact that He had sent invisible Divine assistance to rescue him from falling into evil and sin. This kind of Divine assistance, which comes during moments of trouble and crisis, is not confined to the prophets, such as Yusuf. They can also cover those sincere servants of Allah among ordinary people as well, who also deserve such favors.

Solemnity in Statement

One of the amazing things about the Qur'an, which is also one of its miracles, is its solemnity and its use of respectable language. That is, it never uses indecent words or concepts.

It's speech is never in keeping with the ordinary and illiterate individuals, in the environment of ignorance, but at the same time, it is accessible to all, using a language that the ordinary men and the intellectual can understand.

Among all the biographies mentioned in the Qur'an, there is only one real love story which is the story of Yusuf and Zulaykha.

This story explains the ardent love of a beautiful sensual woman unto a handsome youth, but pure.

However, the Qur'an has beautifully combined precision in expression with solemnity and chastity, and despite the fact that it talks about affairs of the heart, it has utilized the principles of piety, morals and respect without being paralysed in the process.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 25

وَاسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيصَهُ مِن دُبُرٍ وَأَلْفَيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَدَى الْبَابِ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَآءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءاً إِلاَّ أَن يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

25. "And they both raced to the door and she tore his shirt form the back. They both found her husband by the door. She said: 'What is the punishment for him who intends evil to your wife save he be imprisoned or a painful chastisement?'"

The Arabic word /'istibaq/ means one or several persons racing with each other; and the term /qadda/ signifies to be torn apart lengthwise. The word /lafa'/ refers to the sudden finding of something.

Yusuf's firm resistance almost made Zulaykha lose hope. But Yusuf, who had won against the restive low desires in the course of confrontation with that beautiful woman who burned with desire for him, felt he would not be out of danger if he remained in that situation, so he bolted for the door.

Zulaykha, not to be outmaneuvered, took off after him, as the verse indicates, they both raced towards the door, and not being able to catch up to him, she reached out for his shirt to pull him back and tore it from the back. Yusuf did eventually make it to the door, and, on opening it, they came face to face with the 'Aziz.

The verse says:

"And they both raced to the door and she tore his shirt form the back. They both found her husband by the door..."

The need to protect herself from scandal and the desire to punish Yusuf for rejecting her advances flooded her thoughts. Putting on a specious face, she looked at her husband with a straight face and accused Yusuf of having evil designs against her, and sought his punishment by prison or a grievous chastisement.

The verse says:

"...She said: 'What is the punishment for him who intends evil to your wife save he be imprisoned or a painful chastisement?'"

Surah Yusuf – Verse 26

قَالَ هِيَ رَاوَدَتْنِي عَن نَفْسِي وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِنْ أَهْلِهَآ إِن كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِن قُبُلٍ فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

26. "He said: 'She (it was who) sought to seduce me from my (pure) self,' and a witness from her own family bore witness, 'If it be that his shirt is torn from the front, then she speaks the truth and he is of the liars'."

Some narrations say that the witness was a child who, like Jesus (as), spoke from inside the cradle, but since this report is not well documented it cannot be disregarded.

It might be better to think of the witness as one of the counselors of the 'Aziz who was a relative of his wife and who was fairly intelligent that, like 'Aziz, saw the situation.

This "witness" however, did not actually witness the main event, because if he did himself, he would not have used the conditional sentence and circumstantial evidence to make a judgment, therefore the word "witness" is used to describe him as a referee.

At first, Yusuf said nothing, and perhaps if the wife of the 'Aziz did not speak out accusing him with a flagrant lie, her reputation would not have been damaged by the saying:

"She it was (who) sought to seduce me..."

However, once she had made her accusations, Yusuf did not see any wisdom in continuing to hold his tongue, he had to defend himself which meant disclosing the truth where she was concerned, so he said that it was she who was the one who was doing the seducing.

The verse says:

"He said: 'She (it was who) sought to seduce me from my (pure) self,' and a witness from her own family bore witness..."

Obviously, it is hard to believe at first that the unmarried male slave in the prime of his young manhood would be the one who was innocent and the older married woman who was apparently noble, would be the one with the sinful character. Thus, there would have been a greater tendency to accuse Yusuf in this connection than the wife of the 'Aziz.

As Allah is always an advocate of those who are upright and good, He would not allow this pious abstemious man to be the object of false accusations.

Thus, as the Qur'an says a witness from among her very own household suggested that the true culprit would be determined by looking at the way the shirt was torn, that if it were torn from the front, it would indicate that she was right and he would be the liar.

The verse says:

"...'If it be that his shirt is torn from the front, then she speaks the truth and he is of the liars'."

Surah Yusuf - Verse 27

وَإِن كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِن دُبُرٍ فَكَذَبَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

27. "And if his shirt is torn from the back, then she tells a lie, and he is of the truthful (ones)."

In the story of Yusuf, his shirt plays a decisive role. In one part of the story, his shirt, being torn from behind, provides good evidence to prove his innocence and leads to the establishment of Zulaykha's guilt.

This incident is a good example of the application of criminological investigation in establishing guilt. In another part of the story the shirt also plays a pivotal role, the fact that it was not torn apart by a wolf indicated to the father that the brothers had played foul with Yusuf and had fabricated a lie to cover it up.

At the end of the story, the shirt once more plays a major part, becoming the means whereby the father regains his eyesight.

However, generally the application of the proper methods of recognition of crime is necessary for finding the crime and the criminal.

That was why the witness said:

"And if his shirt is torn from the back, then she tells a lie, and he is of the truthful (ones)."

The witness was one of the relatives of the wife of the 'Aziz, as indicated by the phrase /min ahliha/. He was a wise, knowledgeable and intelligent man, and it is said that he had been one of the counselors and consultants of the 'Aziz, who was accompanying 'Aziz at that moment.

Surah Yusuf - Verse 28

فَلَمَّا رَءَا قَمِيصَهُ قُدَّ مِن دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ مِن كَيْدِكُنَّ إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ

28. "So when he (the 'Aziz) saw his shirt was torn from behind, he said: 'Verily it is of the guile of you women! Truly, your guile is great'."

The Qur'anic terms /kayda kunna/ (your guile) here means: 'to accuse some guiltless people while hiding one's own guilt and swiftly dissociating it from oneself without having the slightest anxiety'.

The Qur'an regards the Satan's tricks as weak, but the guile of women have been mentioned as great in this verse. According to the 'Tafsir-us-Safi', it is because the satanic guile is momentary, invisible and

acted in a subtle way, whereas the guile of women is acted along with delicacy, and affection, which are both focused and continuous.

Allah sometimes accomplishes major tasks by means of some small things.

For example: 'Abraha was defeated by the birds of 'Ababil; the life of the Prophet of Islam (S) was saved because of a spider's web; a crow was used to instruct a human being (Cain) on how to bury a human being (Abel); the chastity of Mary was made manifest through the infant's talk, Yusuf's innocence was proved by the tear in his shirt; the faith of a country's people was known through the messages of a bird (Hoopoe); and finally, the People of the Cave were recognized through the kind of their money.

All of these incidents are examples of great occurrences divinely fulfilled through objects and incidents that are otherwise seen as commonplace or insignificant.

The 'Aziz accepted the method proposed by the "witness" and gazed at Yusuf's shirt. He noticed that the shirt had been torn from the back, and he remembered that he had never heard Yusuf tell a lie, even once, he turned to his wife and said that this act was part of the guile of women, that their guile is indeed, very powerful.

The verse says:

"So when he (the 'Aziz) saw his shirt was torn from behind, he said: 'Verily is of the guile of you women! Truly, your guile is great'."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 29

يُوسُفُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا وَاسْتَغْفِرِي لِذَنبِكِ إِنَّكِ كُنْتِ مِنَ الْخَاطِئِينَ

29. "O Yusuf! Overlook this matter; and you, (O my wife), ask forgiveness for your sin, for surely you are of the wrong-doers."

At this moment, owing to his fear that the embarrassing event might come to light and damage his prestige, the 'Aziz saw it convenient to put an end to the whole affair by keeping it quiet. Turning to Yusuf, he told him to forget about it, and turning to his wife, he told her to repent and ask forgiveness for her sin, for she had definitely been the one who did wrong.

The verse says:

"O Yusuf! Overlook this matter; and you, (O my wife), ask forgiveness for your sin, for surely you are of the wrong-doers."

Another great lesson that this part of the story of Yusuf teaches us is that very support of Allah, Who

assists man in the most difficult states. According to His statement which says:

"...whoever is in awe of Allah, He will make for him an outlet," "And give him sustenance from whence he thinks not;..."[3],

Allah caused Yusuf to be proved innocent by means of existence of the tear in his shirt as an evidence.

Yusuf's shirt was also the same thing that one day manifested the lie of Yusuf's brothers before their father because of lack of tear in it, and again his shirt was put over the face of Jacob when he regained his eye sight, and it was brought from Egypt to Kan'an and gave the glad tidings to Jacob.

However, Allah has some secret favours of which no one is aware. When the breeze of this favour blows the affairs may change in a way that it is not predictable for any one, even for the most intelligent members.

Some Explanations

1. The 'Aziz of Egypt wanted to cover up the incident, but the people of the world in all centuries came to know about it in order for Yusuf's innocence to be maintained.

2. The 'Aziz, typical for those among the affluent classes, had a lenient attitude towards matters regarding chastity, and refrained from seriously chastising his wife.

3. Non-godly leaders are usually not able to take a decisive stand towards their own impure wives.

A woman's sexual relationship with any man other than her husband is illegitimate and indecent.

1. Bihar ul-'Anwar, vol. 10 p.227
2. Tafsir Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol.2, p.421
3. Surah At-Talaq, No. 65, verses 62 and 63

Section 4: Yusuf Prefers Prison Against the Temptation

Surah Yusuf - Verse 30

وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَن نَّفْسِهِ ۖ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا ۖ إِنَّا لَنَرَاهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

30. “And some women in the city said: ‘The wife of the ‘Aziz has sought to seduce her slave from his (pure) self; he has affected her with love. Verily we see her in manifest error’.”

The term /šaqaf/ refers to the complications of the upper part of the heart, or of the pericardium. It is said that the Qur’anic phrase /šaqafaha hubban/ means that someone’s love has intermingled with the heart of the beloved which, in turn, increases the intensity of the love.

The incident between the wife of the ‘Aziz and Yusuf was a private affair, which the ‘Aziz had sought to cover up, but such affairs do not remain undisclosed for long, especially when they occur in the palaces of kinds and dwellings of wealthy aristocrats where rumor and hearsay abound.

So finally the secret leaked out of the palace. Some of the women of the city spread the rumor that the wife of ‘Aziz had tried to seduce her slave, and that her love for him had overcome her to the extent that it had conquered her entire heart.

The verse says:

“And some women in the city said: ‘The wife of the ‘Aziz has sought to seduce her slave from his (pure) self; he has affected her with love…”

So they laid the blame squarely at her door, saying:

“…Verily we see her in manifest error’.”

Those women, who said this statement and blamed Zulaykha therewith, were a group of Egyptian aristocratical women that, from the point of sensuality, were not so far from her.

Since they had not have Yusuf, idiomatically, they were hypocritically prudish and, because of that love, considered the wife of ‘Aziz in manifest error.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 31

فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَّكأً وَءَاتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِنْهُنَّ سِكّيناً وَقَالَتِ اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا بَشَراً إِنْ هَذَآ إِلاَّ مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ

31. “So when she heard about their malicious talk, she sent for them and prepared a repast for them. Then she gave each one of them a knife, and said to him (Yusuf): ‘Come forth to them.’ When they saw him, they extolled him, and (in their amazement) cut their hands and said (exclaimed): ‘Allah Blameless! This is not a human being. This is not other than a noble angel!’”

When the wife of ‘Aziz became aware of the intrigue of the Egyptian women, she became very angry. Then she came up with an idea. She invited them to an elaborate party which she had organized for

them and gave each person a sharp knife to peel the fruit served.

The verse says:

“So when she heard about their malicious talk, she sent for them and prepared a repast for them. Then she gave each one of them a knife…”

From the sequence of events, one can readily infer that she did not care much for her husband and was not afraid of him, so she had not learnt anything from the previous scandal.

She then ordered Yusuf to come into the hall so that they could see his beauty for themselves and stop blaming her for what she did.

The verse says:

“…and said to him** (**Yusuf**)**: ‘Come forth to them.’…”

According to several narrations, when the eyes of the Egyptian women fell upon him they were captivated by his unearthly beautiful stature and shining face.

The verse says:

“…When they saw him, they extolled him, and** (**in their amazement**) **cut their hands…”

They were so overwhelmed that they fell head over heels in love with him, which profoundly embarrassed him.

As soon as they saw how abstinent and chaste he was, and his attractive eyes in his innocent face which had blushed from modesty and shame clearly illustrated these facts, they all exclaimed that that young man had never done anything wrong in his life, he was not an ordinary man, but was a sublime heavenly angel.

The verse continues saying:

“…and said** (**exclaimed**)**: ‘Allah Blameless! This is not a human being. This is not other than a noble angel!’”

Explanations

1. The Arabic term /haša/ means: ‘excepting, with the exception’. It was a custom in that time that when they wanted to know a person exempted from an indecency, at first they exempted Allah and then that person.

2. The wife of ‘Aziz was quite politically astute, through the banquet she had arranged she caught the women unawares and was able to expose the vulnerabilities of the rivals in that locality.

3. Talking about other people's problems is not always a show of compassion. It can be the result of jealousy, or part of a plot against them.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 32

قَالَتْ فَذَلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَّنِي فِيهِ وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدتُّهُ عَن نَّفْسِهِ فَاسْتَعْصَمَ وَلَئِن لَّمْ يَفْعَلَ مَآ ءَامُرُهُ لَيُسْجَنَنَّ وَلَيَكُوناً مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ

32. "She said: 'This is before you he about whom you did blame me! And indeed I sought to seduce him from his (pure) self, but he proved continent. And (now), if he does not do what I command him, he shall certainly be imprisoned, and will certainly be of the humiliated!'"

At this moment, the wife of the 'Aziz turned to those women who used to criticize her for her intense love for Yusuf and said that although they had not seen him before, only getting a first glimpse of him caused them to lose their hearts.

How could they possibly have blamed her, when she was exposed to looking at that beautiful face frequently day and night? She also admitted that he was innocent indicating that she was the one who did the seducing.

The verse says:

"She said: 'This is before you he about whom you did blame me! And indeed I sought to seduce him from his (pure) self…"

Thus while she was justifying her behavior, she explicitly confessed her culpability saying that she was the one who invited him to engage in an illicit act which he had refused to do.

The verse continues saying:

"…but he proved continent…"

However, without expressing her remorse, she threatened him with imprisonment and humiliation if he did not acquiesce to her demands.

She said:

"…And (now), if he does not do what I command him, he shall certainly be imprisoned, and will certainly be of the humiliated!'"

Highlights

1- Psychological and social conditions influence individual morality. When 'Aziz' wife was afraid of exposing her evil actions, she closed the doors to the room. However, when she found the Egyptian women on her side, she openly stated that:

"And indeed I sought to seduce him from his self"

The same case applies to society. When people are no longer sensitive to evildoing, it becomes easier to commit sin.

It may be for this very reason that we invocate in the supplication of Kumayl: "*O Allah! Forgive me for all the sins which prevent me from being chaste and break my abstinence*", for at first, committing sins is difficult for man, but as soon as the barriers are broken, it becomes easy.

2- The liar is always exposed and scandalized. The one who claimed that Yusuf wanted to seduce her yesterday, and had had evil intentions towards him, today openly confesses that she herself had had the intention of gratifying her sexual desires towards him.

3- It is true, that at times the enemy also testifies to the honesty of the person he opposes.

4- Residing in palaces paves the way for the loss of one's chastity.

(Although the 'Aziz realized that his wife had betrayed him and he asked her to repent of her guilt, they did not become alienated from each other and he did not distance between his wife and Yusuf.)

Surah Yusuf – Verse 33

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ وَإِلاَّ تَصْرِفْ عَنّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَ وَأَكُن مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

33. "He said: 'My Lord! The prison is dearer to me than that to which they invite me; and if You turn not their guile from me, I may incline towards them and become of the ignorant ones'."

Interestingly, some commentators have narrated an astonishing subject and have said that some of the Egyptian women in the gathering supported the wife of the 'Aziz and, giving right to her, defended her behavior.

They surrounded Yusuf and every one of them tried in her own way to persuade him to submit to the desires of the wife of 'Aziz or to her own, in other words, they all had the same intentions as Zulaykha had.

It is in the face of this overwhelming temptation that Yusuf cries out to his Lord that he would welcome a

life prison than the corruption to which those women were inviting him.

In a tradition attributed to Abu Hamzah al Thumali, it is narrated that Imam Ali-ibn-il-Hussein (as) said that as soon as those women had parted company with Zulaykha, each one of them sent someone in private to Yusuf and requested an audience with him.

Yusuf had been surrounded by a series of difficulties from all sides. However, being already prepared for any mishap that might befall, he turned to Allah immediately without entering into any relationship with these passionate, promiscuous women and sought His help.

The verse says:

"He said: 'My Lord! The prison is dearer to me than that to which they invite me;..."

He was in the prime of his youth, and naturally, the lower aspect of his soul could have inclined towards them and he would have found himself among the ignorant.

But, since he knew that in all cases, especially at the time of crises, there is no way to safety except relying on Allah, he trusted in Allah and asked Him help by saying:

"...and if You turn not their guile from me, I may incline towards them and become of the ignorant ones'."

Points to Remember

1. Men of Allah prefer all the difficulties that come with a life of honor to a sinful life of luxury.

2. By seeking assistance from the Almighty, man can distance himself from any kind of sin and temptation under any kind of circumstance.

3. Hardship and suffering cannot provide man with the justification to commit sin.

4. Man's character depends on his soul and not on his body. If man's soul is free and he is in prison, it can be like a paradise for him. And if his soul is under pressure, even a palace may become a prison for him.

5. To please people at the expense of displeasing Allah is manifest ignorance.

6. As was said, the wife of 'Aziz and the other women employed various means to achieve their objectives. They showed intense love and desire, total submission and later profuse promises of great rewards, finally, when all of that failed, they started threatening Yusuf with imprisonment.

This is the usual methodology that all dictators and despots resort to throughout the ages. It has even been experimented many times that they usually at first show excessive moderation and leniency

towards men of Allah to make them acquiesce to their designs, putting on a smiling face on one occasion, and, on the other, when they fail to achieve their objectives in this way, they resort to the cruelest of threats sometimes at the end of the same sitting that they had with together.

It never occurs to them that they show contradictions and double standards in their behavior, illustrating an abhorring lack of integrity which deserves the utmost humiliation and kinds of censure.

The reason for this is obvious. They are only after their own objectives, and the means are not important for them, because for them, the ends justify the means. The weak and foolish, in this course, may submit themselves sooner or later to these attempts and thus get caught in their trap forever.

But the men of Allah, who are enlightened by the light of faith, easily pass through all these trials showing their steadfastness and irreconcilability with evil. They go as far as courting their death, for victory is the ultimate aim.

Victory here does not only mean their own victory but it also denotes the victory of their school of thought based on principle rather than caprice.

7. There are always some people like the whimsical and promiscuous women of Egypt who regard themselves as innocent and clean when they are not principal players on the scene always pretending to be more virtuous and innocent than some others.

They would think the wife of the ‘Aziz to be vulgar and seductive. But, as soon as the tables are turned, they immediately lose their hearts and prove that whatever virtues they had claimed had been utterly meaningless.

Whereas Zulaykha had fallen in love with Yusuf after frequent meetings with him and after some years of life, these women fell into the very same situation, in the same meeting and after one glance at him, cutting their own hands with knives instead of the fruit they were supposed to cut.

8. When we are facing the attacks of powerful evil forces, and we find ourselves teetering on the edge of the abyss of destruction, we must turn to Allah for protection. We must seek His support, for if His assistance is not there, nothing can be done for us.

This is the lesson which the great Yusuf, the infallible one, has taught us. It is he who says to Allah if their evil plots are not averted from him, he would tend to incline towards them, and he would be left alone in his plight and will be no more. It is holy Allah Who is the Protector, not one’s abilities, powers, or mere virtues.

This state of absolute dependence on Allah (s.w.t.) does not only provide man with a power and perseverance which is unlimited, but it also makes it possible for him to enjoy the hidden Divine favors as well, favors which are impossible to explain and can be only witnessed and accepted. Such people are they who are sheltered by Allah both in this world and the Hereafter.

In one tradition, the Prophet of Islam (S) says that there are seven groups that will be sheltered by Allah on the Day when there will be no shade except His:

1. A just pioneer and leader.

2. A young man who has been trained in servitude unto Allah from the beginning of his life.

3. He whose heart is attached to mosques and places where Allah is worshipped and whenever he leaves those places, he ceaselessly thinks of the time when he can return thereto.

4. Those who work together in obeying Allah, and when they depart from one another, the spiritual bond of their unity remains firm.

5. Those who when they hear Allah's name mentioned, have tears in their eyes because of their sense of responsibility before Allah or for fear of their sins.

6. The man who says that he is in awe of Allah when he is invited to consort with a beautiful woman and he refuses to commit sin.

7. A man who assists those who are in need and provides charity for them in such a way that his left hand does not know what his right hand has done.

Some Narrations Regarding Fear of Allah

1. The Prophet of Allah (S) said:

"He who stops committing sins for the fear of Allah, He, the High, provides him with satisfaction on the Day of Judgment." [1]

2. Once Zayd ibn Suhan asked Amir-ul-Mu'minin (as):

"Which man is superior with Allah, the Almighty, the Glorious?" He answered: "He who is more in awe of Allah, more aware of piety and morality, and is less inclined to worldliness."[2]

3. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The highest ranking man before Allah is he who is the most in awe of Allah." [3]

4. Amir-ul-Mu'minin (as) said:

"How fortunate is he who finds it necessary to be Allah fearing and obeys Allah both in private and in public."[4]

5. The Prophet of Allah (S) said:

"How fortunate are those whose fear of Allah prevents them from fearing others."[5]

Some Narrations Regarding Treason

1. The Prophet of Allah (S) said:

"The believer accepts all inherent traits and characteristics, except treason and lying."[6].

2. Amir-ul-Mu'minin (as) said:

"Abstain from betraying others which is the most heinous of sins, and truly, a traitor will be caught in the torment and torture of the Fire because of his own treachery."[7]

3. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"There are four characteristics, when each of which appears in a house it causes for the destruction of that house, and blessings do not make headway in that house because of those circumstances. They are; treason, theft, drinking alcoholic beverages, and fornication (or adultery)."[8]

4. Amir-ul-Mu'minin (as) said:

"The ultimate in betrayal is betraying a friend and breaking vows and promises."[9]

5. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"It is certain that a true believer never betrays (anyone)." [10]

Surah Yusuf – Verse 34

فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ كَيْدَهُنَّ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

34. "So his Lord answered him and He turned away from him their guile; verily He is the All Hearing, the All Knowing."

According to the Divine promise, Allah always accepts the supplications of the pious. Those sincere fighters for a holy cause (whether it be against one's self, or an outward enemy) and those who assist others in goodness will always get a Divine response to their requests.

Yusuf was not left alone in such a dangerous situation. Allah answered his prayer. Indeed, as the Qur'an says, Allah is the Hearer, the Knower.

The verse says:

"So his Lord answered him and He turned away from him their guile; verily He is the All Hearing, the All Knowing."

He hears the prayers and supplications of His subjects. He is completely aware of their inmost secrets, and He knows the solution to all their problems.

Some commentators reject that while Yusuf knew that Allah would protect him and return away their snare, why did he pray? The answer is that the prayer of Yusuf to Allah was that he could overcome their hearts so that they would dispense with their guile, and Allah answered him either.

As a result of his supplication, the women lost all hope in achieving their objectives and all the tricks that were within their means proved to be of no benefit to them, so, in despair, they stopped chasing him. It was then that Yusuf felt tranquility.

Zulaykha, after seeing the hopelessness of her attempts, was ready to send him to prison.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 35

ثُمَّ بَدَا لَهُمْ مِن بَعْدِ مَا رَأَوُاْ الآيَاتِ لَيَسْجُنُنَّهُ حَتَّي حِينٍ

35. "Then it seemed to them, after they had seen the signs (***of his innocence***)***, to imprison him till a time."***

From Palace to Prison

The strange meeting between the Egyptian women and Yusuf in the palace of the 'Aziz, with its particular tumult, ended. The fear of the increasing damage the sex scandal was causing to the prestige of his family.

In the view of people, it was becoming more and more every day. The 'Aziz and his advisors thought that the only way to rescue the situation was to remove Yusuf from the scene entirely, and the best way to do that was to send him to prison.

This would not only help the people forget about the situation, but would also make it seem that real culprit had been Yusuf himself.

The Qur'an in this holy verse says:

"Then it seemed to them, after they had seen the signs (***of his innocence***)***, to imprison him till a time."***

In such morally decrepit environments, apparently freedom only belongs to those who are corrupt and so

does everything else, whereas the pure and God-fearing individuals, like Yusuf, must be isolated and imprisoned. However, such a situation never lasts forever.

Explanations

1. Only a person with a distracted mind would engage in a fruitless act causing trouble for everyone, like throwing an important needle into the bottom of a well which could not be found and taken out by a hundred wise men.

2. Love is such a distraction. A woman fell in love and although many men and high-ranking officials of a country joined together to solve the problems caused by that woman, they were unable to find a solution.

3. Trials and courts are held in default of a person aften as ceremonial gestures in palaces where despots and dictators live, assure the condemnation of the innocent.

4. Those people who dwell in luxurious palaces are usually reckless and brash. Despite all the reasons in his favour, Yusuf was still convicted and sent to prison.

1. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 67 p. 498
2. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 74, p. 378
3. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 74, p. 180
4. Ghurar ul Hikam, vol. 4, p. 239
5. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 74, p. 126
6. Kanz ul-'Ummal, vol. 3, p. 468
7. Ghurar ul-Hikam vol. 1, p. 150
8. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 76, p. 125, The Amali of Tusi
9. Ghurar ul-Hikam, vol. 2, p. 505
10. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, vol. 100, p. 175

Section 5: Yusuf Preaches Unity of Allah in the Prison

Surah Yusuf – Verse 36

وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السّجْنَ فَتَيَانِ قَالَ أَحَدُهُمَآ إِنّي أَرَانِي أَعْصِرُ خَمْراً وَقَالَ الاَخَرُ إِنّي أَرَانِي أَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَأْسِي خُبْزاً تَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ نَبّئْنَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

36. "And with him there entered into the prison two youths. One of them said (unto Yusuf): 'I saw (in dream) myself pressing wine' The other said: 'I saw (in my dream) myself carrying on my head bread from which the birds were eating.' Tell us its interpretations, verily we see you of the righteous ones'."

Among those who entered into prison with Yusuf, there were two young men, as the verse says:

"And with him there entered into the prison two youths..."

Man's other senses usually become more active in obtaining information when his direct channels of communication and direct access to information are obstructed. In such cases his dreams can provide him with an alternative means.

It is for this reason that it is said that the two men, one of whom was the man responsible for the ruler's buffet, and the other, for his catering services. They approached Yusuf in the prison to describe the wonderful dreams they had seen the previous night.

It is important to note that they were imprisoned because of the false accusations of their enemies who claimed that they were about to poison the king.

Each one of the two prisoners recalled his dream to Yusuf for his interpretation in a manner as the verse says:

"...One of them said (unto Yusuf): 'I saw (in dream) myself pressing wine' The other said: 'I saw (in my dream) myself carrying on my head bread from which the birds were eating.'..."

Then, they added to their statement unto Yusuf:

"...Tell us its interpretations, verily we see you of the righteous ones'."

Some Issues to Remember

1. An Islamic tradition denotes that the reason why they called Yusuf a truly righteous person was because he used to always take care of the sick and the needy in the prison and find accommodation for others.[1]

2. We must take dreams seriously, for there are secrets hidden in some of them.

3. Once the people have confidence in someone, they tend to share all their secrets with him.

4. Enlightened people also leave their impact and influence upon others even when they are confined in prison.

5. Even guilty people tend to have a high esteem for those who are truly righteous.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 37

قَالَ لاَ يَأْتِيكُمَا طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقَانِهِ إِلاَّ نَبَّأْتُكُمَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ قَبْلَ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمَا ذَلِكُمَا مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِي رَبِّي إِنِّي تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لاَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَهُم بِالأَخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ

37. "He said: 'There shall not come to you the food with which you are fed but I will inform you both of its interpretation before it comes to you. This is of what my Lord has taught me. Verily, I have abandoned the religion of a people who do not believe in Allah and they are disbelievers in the Hereafter'."

In the first part of the verse, it is probable that the Qur'an is hinting that Yusuf said he also knew from the side of Allah what kind of food that would be served to them, and that he could also interpret their dreams just as easily.

In this case, the implication would be that in addition to interpreting dreams, Yusuf also knew about other things as well, which he used to foretell. This ability is similar to that of Hadrat Isa (as) who used to read the minds of those around him regarding what they used to eat or what they had stored in their houses.

Question: Why did Hadrat Yusuf (as) not interpret their dreams then and there but postpone their interpretation for later?

Fakhr Razi provides the answer to this question as follows:

1. He wanted to make them wait so that he could advise, admonish, and convert them, perhaps that person might believe before his execution.

2. He wanted to build up their confidence by foretelling the kind of food before the food had been served.

3. He wanted to tantalize them so that they would lend their ears more carefully to what he had to say.

4. As the interpretation of one of the dreams was that that person was going to be executed, Yusuf was postponing the issue so that that person might not lose heart too suddenly.

At any rate, Yusuf, who would not miss any opportunity to provide guidance and counseling, made the most of the two prisoners' requests for the interpretation of their dreams, and used them as a means for introducing and explaining important facts which were helpful not only for their lives, but also for all human beings.

At first, in order to build their confidence, he told them that he would tell them the meanings of their dreams before their food had arrived.

The verse says:

“He said: ‘There shall not come to you the food with which you are fed but I will inform you both of its interpretation before it comes to you…”

Then, the faithful and theistic Yusuf, whose whole entity was filled with Monotheism, made it quite clear that this knowledge of interpreting dreams was among those things taught him by Allah and that nothing could take place without His Will.

The verse continues saying:

“…This is of what my Lord has taught me…”

To counter any misconception that the Almighty would give anything to anyone without conditions, he added that he had abandoned the way of those who did not believe in Allah and the Day of Resurrection, alluding to the idol worshipping people of Egypt and Kan‘an, and that it was this enlightening faith and virtue which made him deserve such a blessing.

The verse says:

“…Verily, I have abandoned the religion of a people who do not believe in Allah and they are disbelievers in the Hereafter’.”

The Messages Conveyed in this Verse:

1. In order to impress others more deeply, it is sometimes necessary to show one’s scientific ability and knowledge and one’s perfections and virtues.

2. He who escapes the dark shadows of polytheism, arrives at the enlightenment of knowledge and Truth.

3. Belief in monotheism and resurrection along with other doctrines is a requirement in all religions.

4. The basis of faith rests upon distancing oneself from polytheism and unbelief /tabarri/ and reliance upon the saints of Allah, as is mentioned in the verse quoted above and the next verse, saying:

“…Verily, I have abandoned the religion of a people who do not believe in Allah…” “And I have followed the religion of my fathers, ’Ibrahim…”

Surah Yusuf – Verse 38

وَاتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ ءَابآءِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ مَا كَانَ لَنَآ أَن نُّشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ مِن شَيْءٍ ذَلِكَ مِن فَضْلِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَي النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لا يَشْكُرُونَ

38. “And I have followed the religion of my fathers, ’Ibrahim, Ishaq and Ya‘qub. And it beseems us

not to associate aught with Allah. That is of Allah's favor upon us and upon mankind, but most people do not give thanks."

Since hereditary nobility plays an important role in the formation of the character of an individual, it also has a very important role when people are to accept a person.

Therefore, Hadrat Yusuf introduces himself by presenting his illustrious lineage of forefathers, all of whom were Divine prophets, confirming, at the same time, his sanctified message. This is exactly the same method which the Prophet (S) used to employ in introducing himself.

He used to say, that he was the same oft mentioned Prophet whose name had been mentioned in both the Torah and the Gospels.

Hadrat Sayyid-ush-Shuhada, Hussein ibn Ali (as) and Imam Sajjad (as) also introduced themselves to the people in Karbala and Syria as the children of Fatimat-az-Zahra (as), saying:

'I am the son of Fatimat-az-Zahra'.

The Arabic term /millat/ has been applied in the Qur'an with the sense of religion. And in verse 78 of Surah Hajj, the profile of the religion of 'Ibrahim /millata 'Ibrahim/ has been depicted as:

"And strive hard in (the way of), such a striving as is due to Him; He has chosen you, and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion – the faith of your father 'Ibrahim. It is He Who has named you Muslims, both before and in this (revelation).....So establish the regular prayer, do give regular Charity, and hold fast to Allah!"

Turning ones back to the ways of divine prophets and adhering to polytheism is ingratitude due to the blessings of Allah. Therefore, we must dissociate ourselves from such ideas, as they go against the inherent good which is found in human nature. Abraham said:

"And I have followed the religion of my fathers, 'Ibrahim, Ishaq and Ya'qub..."

Hadrat Yusuf is not only a descendent by blood lineage, he is also an inheritor of a spiritual lineage as well, thus it does not behoove him to associate anyone with Allah, and this monotheistic pedigree goes back to the iconoclastic 'Ibrahim. This is one of the Divine blessings sent upon the family of 'Ibrahim and upon all people, for that matter.

The verse says:

"...And it beseems us not to associate aught with Allah. That is of Allah's favor upon us and upon mankind..."

Unfortunately, most people do not thank Allah for all these blessings and deviate from the Right Path. The verse says:

"…but most people do not give thanks."

Incidentally, it is worthy to note that these verses show that despite the fact that Yusuf (as) used to live among those idol – worshippers, Allah, the Magnificent, has nowhere mentioned that this respectable and worthy person ever called on the people to be monotheistic and worship the One God, except in this verse where he has extended the invitation to the two prisoners who were with him in prison.

It seems that he was not at all optimistic about the people of Egypt lending their ears to him, let alone accepting his message.

However, when he noticed that these two individuals took him as a righteous and decent man of good conduct, and they turned to him, a glimmer of hope and success appeared in his heart that they might probably listen to him and accept him.

As a result, he proceeded to call them to the worship of Allah and thus be converted to the faith of monotheism.

In the narrations it is said that these prisoners told Yusuf that as soon as they saw him, they had become interested in him and began to love him greatly.

Yusuf answered that they would better not love him or express any affection for him, for, according to him, the catastrophes that had been inflicted upon him was because of friendship, and whoever had loved him somehow caused him some sort of disaster.

His aunt had loved him and she accused him to theft. His father had loved him, and because of this, he was thrown down to the bottom of the well. The wife of the 'Aziz had loved him and because of that he was put in prison.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 39

يَا صَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ ءَأَرْبَابٌ مُّتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمِ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

39. "O my (two) mates of the prison! Are (many) diverse lords better, or Allah, the One, the All-Dominant?"

Men are of three different types: One group is flexible like the air which has no form or shape and is so volatile that it can naturally fill any container regardless of its size, shape, or structure.

The second group is inflexible and resistant in all its aspects, like iron and steel which can withstand all kinds of pressure from the outside. The third group is composed of leaders and pioneers who seek to convert everything into what Allah has ordained. Yusuf is an example of the third group, seeking to

convert polytheists into monotheism even in the prison.

In different occurrences of the Sublime Qur'an, we find that it has employed the method of comparing ideas supporting true monotheism and unbelief, some examples of which, concerning Allah, we present below.

1) ***"It there any of your partners*** (***whom you ascribe unto Allah that***) ***can originate creation, then bring it back again?"*** [2]

2) ***"It there any of your partners*** (***whom you ascribe unto Allah***) ***one*** (***that***) ***leads towards the Truth?"***[3]

3) ***"Shall I seek a lord other than Allah while He is the Lord of everything?"***[4]

4) ***"Is Allah better, or what they associate*** (***with Him***)***?"***[5]

Explanations

1. Call people to the true faith with love and affection.

2. Use opportune places and times for the propagation of religion.

(As soon as Yusuf realizes that they require him to interpret their dreams, he takes the opportunity to propagate the faith.)

3. Queries and comparisons are often channels of both communication and guidance.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 40

مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِهِ إِلاَّ أَسْمآءً سَمَّيْتُمُوهَآ أَنتُمْ وءَابَآؤُكُم مَّآ أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِن سُلْطَانٍ إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلاَّ لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ أَلاَّ تَعْبُدُوا إِلاَّ إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ الدّينُ الْقَيّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

40. "You do not worship besides Him but (***mere***) ***names which you have named, you and your fathers, for which Allah has not sent down any authority. Judgment belongs only to Allah. He has commanded that you worship none but Him. That is the right religion, but most people do not know."***

Those who are worshipped other than Him are not the substantial and real objects of worship. On the contrary, they are the products of man's own imagination or that of his ancestors.

One's ideas must be either based upon rational demonstration or they must have the traditions as their firm foundation. Therefore, one must not bow to any command other than those issued from Divine

sources, for issuing commands and decrees are the sole prerogatives of Allah.

All laws are legally unstable, except Divine laws.

Ignorance and the lack of knowledge pave the way for idol worship. Most people who are ignorant suffer from conscious ignorance and are aware of their own lack of knowledge, or they suffer from unconscious ignorance thinking they know while in actual fact they do not know.

The honor and respect that we bestow upon powerful individuals and organizations, protocols, pomp meetings, supports, condemnations, and circumstance are nothing but fictitious titles and modern icons which we ourselves have created and have tried to relate to them instead of the Divinity as if they were realities.

In reality, however, this fact must be believed that "***It is only He who is worthy of governing***" so one must never surrender to icons and despots and bow to them. One must believe in monotheism in all its dimensions: in worship, in government, in culture, and in all things.

The verse says:

"You do not worship besides Him but (***mere***) ***names which you have named, you and your fathers, for which Allah has not sent down any authority. Judgment belongs only to Allah. He has commanded that you worship none but Him..."***

This is the direct and sustaining Divine way of life. However, most people are not aware of this and owing to this lack of awareness, they deviate from the right path, going astray in idol worship and surrendering to non – Divine governments.

Consequently, they suffer tortures, deprivations, and disasters as a result of their choice of the wrong path of life. The verse says:

"...That is the right religion, but most people do not know."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 41

يَاصَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ أَمَّآ أَحَدُكُمَا فَيَسْقِي رَبَّهُ خَمْراً وَأَمَّا الأَخَرُ فَيُصْلَبُ فَتَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِن رَّأْسِهِ قُضِيَ الأَمْرُ الَّذِي فِيهِ تَسْتَفْتِيَانِ

41. "O' my (***two***) ***mates of the prison! as for one of you, he shall pour out wine for his lord to drink; whereas the other will be crucified and the birds shall eat on his head. The matter is decreed about which you do enquire."***

The Arabic term /rabb/ is also applied for governor, as well as lord in the Arabic phrase: /rabbud dar/

which means: the lord of the house or the owner. Therefore, the phrase /fayasqi rabbahu xamra/ means: 'he gives wine to his lord.'

From here on, he begins interpreting the dreams of those two prisoners, but before this Yusuf had preached them Monotheism and then he expressed his miracle for them. He began with the interpretation of the butler.

It has been narrated that the first prisoner had also seen three bunches of grapes in his dream. Hadrat Yusuf said that they meant that that prisoner would remain in prison for three more days and he would return to his original profession on the fourth day.

The other prisoner on the other hand, who had been the King's cook, had seen three bags instead. Yusuf said that they also meant that he would stay in prison for three more days, but his end was much more gloomy. The king would take him out of the prison after that and had him hanged where the birds could eat on his head.

The verse from the tongue of Yusuf says:

"O' my** (**two**) **mates of the prison! as for one of you, he shall pour out wine for his lord to drink; whereas the other will be crucified and the birds shall eat on his head. The matter is decreed about which you do enquire."

It is said that the latter, on hearing the interpretation, said that he had not dreamed at all and he had been only joking. Yusuf (as) then told him that his fate had been decreed and what was said had to be fulfilled.

From these accounts it is evident that Yusuf (as) had received the news from the invisible world revealed to him; not as the dreams other people usually interpret.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 42

وَقَالَ لِلَّذِي ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ نَاجٍ مِّنْهُمَا اذكُرْنِي عِندَ رَبِّكَ فَأَنسَاهُ الشَّيْطَانُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهِ فَلَبِثَ فِي السِّجْنِ بِضْعَ سِنِينَ

42. "And he said to him whom he knew would be saved of the two: 'Mention me to your lord.' However, Satan caused him to forget to mention him to his lord, so he** (**Yusuf**) **remained in prison a few years."

The Arabic word /zann/ is employed with several different meanings. In certain circumstances it is used to mean 'belief' and 'knowledge', because Yusuf had explicitly and decisively foretold the forthcoming release of one prisoner, and the execution of the other. Therefore, the word /zann/ does not mean 'suspicion' in this verse, which is the usual meaning of the term.

The Arabic term /bid'/ refers to any number less than 10, which has led most commentators to believe that the number of years of Yusuf imprisonment had amounted to 7 years.

In some commentaries, the Qur'anic sentence /fa'ansah-uš-šaytanu/ has been interpreted to mean that Satan took Allah out of the mind of Yusuf when he took recourse to the king's cup bearer for assistance instead of turning to Allah and therefore, he had forgotten Allah, which was a 'leaving the better' for Yusuf and he had to stay in prison for several more years for that.

The verse says:

"And he said to him whom he knew would be saved of the two: 'Mention me to your lord.' However, Satan caused him to forget to mention him to his lord, so he (Yusuf) remained in prison a few years."

The writer of Al Mizan, however, writes that such narrations are in contradiction to the Qur'an for the Qur'an considers Yusuf as one of the 'sincere' and true believers whom Satan has no influence over.

Moreover, in the next two verses, we see that the person who had forgotten about Yusuf was finally reminded, thus it becomes clear that the question of forgetfulness concerned the cup-bearer and not Yusuf.

Imam Sadiq (as) has been quoted to have said that Gabriel at the moment came up to Yusuf and said:

*Who is it that made **you** the most beautiful of all people?*

Yusuf answered:

My Lord.

Gabriel asked:

Who is it that made you the most favored among all your brothers with your father?

Yusuf answered:

My Lord.

Gabriel asked:

Who is it that sent the caravan of camels to rescue you from the bottom of the well?

Yusuf answered:

My Lord.

Gabriel:

Who is it that kept away the stone thrown at you?

Yusuf:

My Lord.

Gabriel:

Who is it that took you out from the well?

Yusuf:

My Lord.

Gabriel:

Who kept the lusts of those women which were targeted at you from reaching you?

Yusuf:

My Lord.

Gabriel:

Your Lord puts this question to you: 'Then what caused you to take your problem to a creature and not to Me, the Creator? In order for the retribution of the word you said and for what you have done, you must remain in the prison for several more years.'[6]

It is important, however, to note that in different kinds of circumstances, in order to repel the harms and avoiding some difficulties, it is permitted to take recourse to some mortals and it is not a vile.

On many occasions, this cannot be avoided, and sometimes it is even absolutely necessary, or it becomes compulsory.

Our Prophet (S) used to ask for assistance of the emigrants, and companions, as well as others in matters where he needed their help. If seeking assistance from other than Allah were not permissible and were a vile, he (S) would not have done it.

Thus if these narrations are correct, one must say that Yusuf's blameworthiness and the punishment imposed on him were due to the possibility that he might have abandoned that admirable habit he had which made him wait patiently for Allah's decree to manifest, and made him trust only in Allah, the Glorified, in all catastrophes and hardships.

This story teaches us to seek Allah's support and assistance when hardships and calamities befall us. We must seek to find shelter in Him alone, while at the same time it is permissible to seek the support of others in these circumstances knowing that it is because of His will others are there to help us.

Imam Sadiq (as) has been quoted to have said that Gabriel taught Yusuf the following supplication to recite after he finished each set of prayers for his freedom from prison:

"O Allah, provide me with the means of relief and deliverance and provide me with my sustenance from where I know and where I do not know."

And Shu'ayb Aqarquti, quoting Imam Sadiq (as), says that when the period of Yusuf's imprisonment came to an end and the day of his freedom had arrived, he placed his cheeks on the ground (in humility) and said:

"O Allah! if my sins have besmeared my honour when I face You, so I call upon You by the combined honour of my meritorious ancestors, 'Ibrahim, Isma'il, Is-haq, and Ya'qub."

After this prayer, Allah provided him with the means for his freedom. Shu'ayb, the narrator of the tradition, asked the Imam if they could say the same prayer. The Imam replied:

You can also say something similar in this way; "O Allah, my sins have besmeared my honour when I face You, so I come to You and I call upon You by the combined honour of Your Prophet (S), Ali, Fatimah, Hassan, Hussayn, and the Imams (as)7."

1. Tafsir Nur-uth- Thaqalayn. Mizan ul Hikmah
2. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 34
3. Ibid, 35
4. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 164
5. Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 59
6. Tafsir Abu Hamid Muhammad al Ghazali; Tafsir Majma'-ul-Bayan, Tafsir Burhan, Tafsir Safi.
7. Tafsirs: Majma' ul Bayan, vol. 5, p. 235 and Safi, vol. 3, p. 23 and la

Section 6: The King's Dream – Yusuf's Interpretation

Surah Yusuf – Verse 43

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ إِنّي أَرَي سَبْعَ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعَ سُنْبُلاتٍ خُضْرٍ وءَاُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ يَآ أَيُّهَا الْمَلأُ

أَفْتُونِي فِي رُءْيَايَ إِن كُنتُمْ لِلرُّءْيَا تَعْبُرُونَ

43. "And** (**once**) **the king** (**of Egypt**) **said: 'Verily I saw** (**in a dream**) **seven fat cows which seven lean cows were eating; and seven green ears of corn and other** (**seven**) **dry. O' chiefs** (**of my court**)**! Explain to me my dream, if you are able to interpret dreams'."

This Surah talks about three dreams: namely Yusuf's dream itself, the dream of his two fellow prisoners, and the dream of the king of Egypt.

In the Torah it is cited that the king dreamed these two subjects on two different occasions; on one occasion the lean cows were eating the fat ones, and on another separate occasion, the green ears of corn were alongside the dry ears.[1]

As for the speculation that the 'Aziz of Egypt was the same person as the king of Egypt or that the two individuals were different, there are a number of differences in opinion which do not concern us here for the issues involved do not have any role to play in our discussion.

In Roudat-ul-Kafi dreams are said to consist of three kinds: The first type of dreams are those that give good tidings from the Divine, the second type are terrible dreams from the Satan, and the third type are those dreams that are meaningless and disorganized.

Yusuf had remained forgotten within the confines of the prison walls for a number of years, busy perfecting himself and guiding the prisoners around him.

Life went on as usual until a seemingly minor matter changed not only his destiny but that of the entire people of Egypt and those of its around.

The king of Egypt, (called Walid-ibn-Rayyan), whose minister was the 'Aziz, had had an apparently confused dream. Next morning he summoned all the dream interpreters and his entourage and described the dream to them.

He said that he had a dream in which he saw seven lean cows attacked and devoured seven fat ones and seven green ears of corn with seven dry and withered ones spiraling around the former made them useless.

The verse says:

"And** (**once**) **the king** (**of Egypt**) **said: 'Verily I saw** (**in a dream**) **seven fat cows which seven lean cows were eating; and seven green ears of corn and other** (**seven**) **dry..."

He then turned to them and asked them for their opinion about this dream.

The verse says:

"…O' chiefs** (**of my court**)**! Explain to me my dream, if you are able to interpret dreams'."

Explanations

1. Allah (s.w.t.) saves a nation from famine by giving its oppressive and tyrannical king a dream on condition that its only interpreter be Yusuf.

2. The king of Egypt had had this astonishing dream several times.

3. The chiefs and the powerful people begin feeling threatened at the slightest unpleasant sign and clue lest their power might be lost and taken away from them.

4. To interpret dreams, one must turn to the right kind of people and one must not disclose it to anyone that is not properly qualified to interpret it.

(…***if you are able to interpret dreams***'.)

Surah Yusuf – Verse 44

قَالُوا أَضْغَاثُ أَحْلاَمٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَأْوِيلِ الأَحْلامِ بِعَالِمِينَ

44. "They said: 'confused medley of dreams** (**they are**)**, and we do not know the interpretation of** (**such confused**) **dreams'."

The Arabic term /'adqa/ is the plural form of /daq/ which means mixing; it also means a bundle of mixed sticks.

The Arabic word /ahlam/ is the plural form of /hulm/ which means a nightmarish dream, and /'adqau 'ahlam/ means dreams that are random, having no order and following no sequence so that an interpreter of dreams can not obtain any clues in order to interpret them.

The verse says:

"They said: 'confused medley of dreams** (**they are**)**, and we do not know the interpretation of** (**such confused**) **dreams'."

Also, the ignorance of the official dream interpreters and their lack of knowledge was the cause for Yusuf's release from prison, because at that time the cup-bearer of the king suddenly remembered Yusuf.

He approached the king and kneeled before him and said that in the course of being imprisoned with the cook, they saw dreams in the prison. They said their dreams to a man there, and he interpreted them.

There happened actually what the man had said.

Now, he asked the king to let him go unto that man and bring the interpretation of the king’s dream to him.

Explanations

1. Do not try to justify your ignorance. When the dignitaries of the king’s court did not have any knowledge of interpreting dreams accurately, they said that the dream was confused and lacked coherence.

2. Tasks that require skill must be left to those who are capable. An expert would interpret a dream correctly whereas the non expert would claim that the same dream is confused and non interpretable.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 45

وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنَبِّئُكُم بِتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُونِ

45. “And of the two (prisoners), he who had been released, remembered (Yusuf) after a time and said ‘I will inform you of its interpretation, so send me (to Yusuf)’.”

Although the word /’ummah/ means ‘a community of people’, in this context it refers to ‘a number of days’.2

Good things reveal themselves sooner or later, and those who are knowledgeable must be introduced and eventually be called upon to solve problems in their field of experience.

Here, the cup-bearer of the king, who had gotten out of the prison, remembered the event of his dream in the prison interpreted by Yusuf.

The verse says:

“And of the two (prisoners), she who had been released, remembered (Yusuf) after a time and said ‘I will inform you of its interpretation, so send me (to Yusuf)’.”

This statement changed the status of the meeting. All the audience were gazing the cup-bearer. Then, finally, he was permitted to leave for it promptly.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 46

يُوسُفُ أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُ أَفْتِنَا فِي سَبْعِ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعِ سُنْبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ لَعَلِّي أَرْجِعُ

إِلَي النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

46. "Yusuf, O truthful one! Expound to us regarding (***the dream of***) ***seven fat cows which seven lean ones were devouring, and seven green ears of corn and other*** (***seven***) ***dry, that I may go back to the people, that they may know."***

The Arabic term /siddiq/ refers to someone whose words and deeds as well as his beliefs and behavior correspond to each other.

As his prison companion, the cup-bearer, had heard and seen Yusuf's words and deeds inside the prison, and he had himself actually experienced Yusuf's accuracy of interpretation regarding his own dream and that of his friend, this is why he addressed him with the epithet /siddiq/ or 'The Truthful One'.

Incidentally, the title /siddiq/ is one of the titles which the Prophet (S) accorded Hadrat Ali (as).3

And so the cup-bearer went to his old cellmate still inside the prison, the friend to whom he had been very untrustworthy to ask him about the interpretation of the dream that had been obsessing the king, with the full faith that the great Yusuf would forgive him and refrain from upbraiding him. The above verse says explains this meaning.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 47

قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَأَباً فَمَا حَصَدتُّم فَذَرُوهُ فِي سُنْبُلِهِ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ

47. "He said: 'You shall sow for seven consecutive years and that which you have harvested you leave it in its ear, except a little whereof you eat'."

Instead of criticizing his friend in prison for forgetting and neglecting him, and without setting any pre conditions for interpreting the king's dream, Yusuf immediately interpreted the dream, for when society is in times of crisis and need, it is not meritorious to withhold knowledge especially in regard to that knowledge which can alleviate the crisis.

Thus he said to his friend, that the people should cultivate in earnest for seven consecutive years, but put whatever they reap in storage, except for the small amount necessary for their personal needs. The verse says:

"He said: 'You shall sow for seven consecutive years and that which you have harvested you leave it in its ear, except a little whereof you eat'."

In a clear and thorough manner he outlined the strategy of preparing for the coming drought with a defined program of food rationing and stockpiling surplus production, showing that not only was he well

versed in the science of dream interpretation, but that he was an authority in economic planning and administration as well.

Explanations

1. The men of Allah must always think of the people's welfare and have designs both in the long and short terms.

2. If grain is stored while it is still inside their husks, it naturally lasts longer. Therefore, at a time when there were no modern facilities for efficient grain storage, stockpiling had to take into consideration the options available and exploit them efficiently.

3. Getting prepared for all kinds of disasters such as famines, earthquakes, and floods through planning and taking appropriate measures for the future are not incompatible with trusting in Allah and submission to Allah's decree.

4. Not everything bitter is bad. This very famine resulted in Yusuf's rise in the government and encouraged the people to work hard. The stockpile which they made at that time led to a great degree of self sufficiency. Indulgence today leads to scarcity tomorrow.

5. Keeping an eye upon the future and long term planning are absolutely necessary for the administration of any country; and so is government control over production and distribution under situations of economic crisis.

6. The dreams of unbelievers can also prove to reflect hidden realities and can contain some instructions for the preservation of a society.

Surah Yusuf – Verses 48 – 49

ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ يَأْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً مِمَّا تُحْصِنُونَ

ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيهِ يَعْصِرُونَ

48. "Then after that seven years of hardship will come that (people) will consume what you have before hand laid up for them, except a little of what you will have preserved."
49. "Then there will come after that a year in which the people will have rain, and in it they will press (wine and oil)."

The Arabic phrase /yuqa-un-nas/ is either derived from /qau/ 'to help' in which case the verse could mean that Allah would help the people and the difficulties which they had over the past fourteen years

will be over; or it could be derived from /qay/ which means to rain and thus the period of hardship would be brought to an end.4

Yusuf had indicated that the seven lean cows and the seven fat cows, the seven green ears and seven withered ears symbolized fourteen years of prosperity and famine.

The verse says:

"Then after that seven years of hardship will come that (***people***) ***will consume what you have before hand laid up for them, except a little of what you will have preserved."***

He also predicted that the fifteenth year would be a year of abundant rain and affluence.

The verse says:

"Then there will come after that a year in which the people will have rain, and in it they will press (***wine and oil***)***."***

However, this was not simply dreamt by the king, this indicates that Yusuf included more news from the invisible in order to pave the way for the acceptance of his prophethood.

The interpretation which Yusuf had put forth for the dream was very precise and exact. Indeed, it indicates that he was no ordinary dream interpreter; in fact he was a leader inside a prison who was able to forge a countrywide program for the entire kingdom for the next fifteen years.

The interpretation and the plans proposed created the bases both for relieving the people of Egypt from the devastation of the famine and Yusuf's freedom from the confinement of prison. In the end, it resulted in changing a government of despots.

The conditions for an efficient administrative system in any given society are:

1-People's confidence,

2-Sincerity,

3-Wisdom and knowledge,

4-Correct prediction and forecasting, and

5-People's obedience.

Thus, the people of Egypt were saved from their plight because they obeyed Yusuf.

1. Tafsir Al-Mizan, and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
2. Tafsir-ul-Kabir, and Al-Mizan
3. Tafsir Atyab ul-Bayan and Tefsir ul-Kabir.

4. Tafsir Al-Mizan.

Section 7: Yusuf Cleared of the False Charge

Surah Yusuf – Verse 50

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُونِي بِهِ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُ الرَّسُولُ قَالَ ارْجِعْ إِلَي رَبِّكَ فَسْأَلْهُ مَا بَالُ النِّسْوَةِ اللاَّتِي قَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ إِنَّ رَبِّي بِكَيْدِهِنَّ عَلِيمٌ

50. "So the king said: 'Bring him to me.' Then, when the messenger came to him, he (Yusuf) said: 'Go back unto your lord and ask him: What was the case of the women who cut their own hands? Verily my Lord is aware of their guile'."

By interpreting the king's dream and proposing a precise program of dealing with the future impending famine without attaching any preconditions, Yusuf not only showed in prison that he was an extraordinary person, but he also indicated that he was a knowledgeable and wise man. The verse says:

"So the king said: 'Bring him to me.'…"

When the messenger came to him, Yusuf did not jump to seize his freedom, instead he requested a reevaluation of his past record, he would not leave the prison just by the king's permission and forgiveness; yet, he told him that he should go back to the king and ask him about the women who had been at the palace of the 'Aziz and had cut their hands.

He did not want his freedom to be the result of a royal amnesty. Yusuf wanted his innocence and chastity to be vindicated and get the king to understand that his entire regime was more corrupt and injustice more widespread that he could have imagined. Probably, because he held the 'Aziz in great respect, he did not mention his wife, and only mentioned the women as a group.

It is mentioned in an Islamic tradition that the blessed Prophet (S) said:

"*I am astonished at the patience of Yusuf, whenever the king needed his dream interpreted, Yusuf did not say that he would not do such unless he was freed from prison, but when they wanted to free him, he did not come out until all the charges and accusations against him were refuted."*

Therefore, when the messenger of the king came to Yusuf, instead of being happy that after years of imprisonment he was going to be free, he gave him a negative answer. The verse says:

Then, when the messenger came to him, he (Yusuf) said: 'Go back unto your lord and ask him: What was the case of the women who cut their own hands?..."

Yusuf did not want to accept the disgrace of the king's forgiveness, and after freeing from prison to live as a criminal, or at least as an accused one who had been included the royal amnesty. He wanted to perfectly prove his innocence and chastity and then get free honourably.

Then he added implying that if common people of Egypt, and even the people of the royal court, might not know how and by who the plan of his imprisonment was designed, but the Lord was aware of the guile of those women.

The holy verse continues saying:

"...Verily my Lord is aware of their guile'."

Explanations

1. Freedom at any price is often of no value. To prove one's innocence is more important than one's freedom.

2. Yusuf (as) first removed all misconceptions from the people's minds regarding his role in the scandal, then later accepted his release.

3. It is a religious obligation for everyone to guard and defend his reputation.

4. Yusuf made it known to the king that after his release from the prison, he would not regard him as his Allah, or lord and would not consider himself as his slave. On the contrary, he would regard the Almighty as his Lord.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 51

قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُنَّ إِذْ رَاوَدتُّنَّ يُوسُفَ عَن نَّفْسِهِ قُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِن سُوءٍ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ الْآنَ
حَصْحَصَ الْحَقُّ أَنَاْ رَاوَدتُّهُ عَن نَّفْسِهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

51. "He (the king) said (to the women): 'What was the matter with you women when you sought to seduce Yusuf from his (pure) self?' They answered: 'Allah Blameless! We know no evil of him.' The wife of the 'Aziz said: 'Now the truth has become manifest, I (it was who) sought to seduce him from his (pure) self, and verily he is of the truthful ones'."

The Arabic term /xatb/ means being called or invited for an important matter. The term /xatib/ refers to a person who calls the people or invites them for such a matter.

The Qur'anic term /has-hasa/, which means 'to come to light', is derived from the word /hissah/ with the sense of: share, part, and sorting out the 'true' from the 'untrue'.

When the special envoy returned to the king and frankly communicated Yusuf's proposal to him, he was even more astonished by his greatness of character and lofty aims. Therefore, he lost no time in contacting the women who had taken part in the affair. He had them brought before him and asked them about what happened when they had made their passes at Yusuf.

The verse says:

"He** (**the king**) **said** (**to the women**)**: 'What was the matter with you women when you sought to seduce Yusuf from his** (**pure**) **self?'..."

Their dormant consciences were aroused and all of a sudden, because of the provocative question, they unanimously declared that Yusuf had not been guilty and testified to his chastity and flawless personality. The verse says:

"...They answered: 'Allah Blameless! We know no evil of him.'..."

The wife of the 'Aziz, who was attending there, felt the time ripe for her to confess her wrongdoing and reconcile her guilty conscience after several years.

She then bore testimony to Yusuf's chastity and confessed her guilt especially when she became aware of his greatness and magnitude which, as a result of his message to the king was becoming well known and he had mentioned nothing about her in his message except something secretly pointing to those women of Egypt.

Suddenly, as if a burst occurred in her inside, she exclaimed such the Qur'an says:

"...The wife of the 'Aziz said: 'Now the truth has become manifest, I** (**it was who**) **sought to seduce him from his** (**pure**) **self, and verily he is of the truthful ones'."

Explanations

1. Whenever there is a knotty and complicated problem, the person in charge should study the evidence himself and proceed to set up the mechanism to see that justice is done.

2. Accused persons should be invited to defend themselves. In the story even Zulaykha was present when the investigation was taking place.

3. Truth would not always remain hidden, guilty consciences will be aroused one day and they will of necessity, confess. Social pressure and the environmental influences can drive even the stiff-necked to confess. As soon as the wife of the 'Aziz was convinced that all the women had testified to Yusuf's

innocence, she also accepted to confess.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 52

ذَلِكَ لِيَعْلَمَ اَنِيّ لَمْ أَخُنْهُ بِالْغَيْبِ وَاَنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يَهْدِي كَيْدَ الْخَآئِنِينَ

52. "(Yusuf said): "That, so that he (the 'Aziz) may know that I have not betrayed him in secret, and that Allah does not guide the device of the treacherous.""

There are two views concerning this holy verse. Some commentators claim that it is a continuation of the speech of Zulaykha, the wife of 'Aziz. Others attribute these words to Yusuf (as).

However, when we explore the verse in depth, the latter view seems more likely to be correct, for what treason can be greater than sending an innocent man to prison for several years?

If these were the words of Zulaykha, it implies that her confession was made to remind Yusuf that she had not betrayed him in his absence and had not accused him for whatever had transpired. However, she did betray him and leveled untrue accusations against him in his presence.

If, on the other hand, these are the words of Yusuf, that he sent back the messenger of the king asking him to investigate the status of these Egyptian women, it was due to the fact that he wanted the king or the 'Aziz to know that he had never betrayed the latter in his absence concerning his wife; for Allah does not guide traitors when they engage in their double dealing.

The verse says:

"(Yusuf said): "That, so that he (the 'Aziz) may know that I have not betrayed him in secret, and that Allah does not guide the device of the treacherous.""

Explanations

1. A sublime person does not seek vengeance rather he searches for the truth and seeks to protect honor and respect.

2. The sign of true belief is abstaining from betraying others secretly.

3. Having evil intentions towards other people's spouses is considered as being treacherous to their husbands themselves.

4. A traitor does not achieve his objectives and his end is not easy. Of course, once we are pure and truthful Allah does not allow the wicked to damage our reputation.

5. Yusuf (as) endeavored to draw the king's attention to the fact that Allah's Will and Divine Providence always play a decisive role in occurrences and events.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 53

وَمَآ أُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلاَّ مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

53. "And I do not absolve myself, verily the (human) soul enjoins to evil, save that whereon my Lord has mercy; verily my Lord is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

There are several descriptions throughout the Qur'an of the self or soul; some of them are pointed out here:

1) The despotic soul which leads one to commit evil and vicious acts. If it is not controlled by faith and reason, it results in man's sudden fall.

2) The reproaching soul. This self or ego is active when a guilty person blames and scolds himself. In this case, he tends to seek repentance and is apologetic for the sin or crime which he has committed.

3) The peaceful soul which is found in only the prophets, and those truly trained by them. Once they find themselves surrounded by unbridled passion and ignorance, they seek the help of Allah to be extricated from it. They owe everything to Allah who loves them very much.

Yusuf (as) sees Allah's grace and favor as the reason for his unscathed honor and the absence of treachery from his heart, since man with a human nature replete with frailties cannot excuse himself of the evil tendencies that are present in his soul.

The verse from the tongue of Yusuf says:

"And I do not absolve myself, verily the (human) soul enjoins to evil, save that whereon my Lord has mercy; verily my Lord is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

Many Islamic narrations have pointed out the dangerous qualities present in the soul, regarding giving excuses for its evil tendencies, self satisfaction and self gratification as the results of corrupt reasoning which are counted among the greatest of the traps laid by the Satan.

Explanations

1. One should never admire himself immaculate and free of blame, excusing oneself of faults.

2. Only Allah's grace is the source of salvation. Once man is left to himself, he will collapse.

3. The dangers that are engendered by the self are very grave, do not regard them as simple.

4. Despite all the dangers which may be surrounding you, do not despair of Allah's grace.

5. One of the conditions of perfection is that one should not consider himself perfect although everyone else might regard him as such.

In Hadrat Yusuf's (as) case, everybody bore witness to his perfection, they included his brothers, the wife of the 'Aziz, the king's witness, Satan, as well as all the prisoners, nevertheless, Yusuf himself asserts that he was not perfect by saying:

"I do not absolve myself. ..."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 54

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُونِي بِهِ أَسْتَخْلِصْهُ لِنَفْسِي فَلَمَّا كَلَّمَهُ قَالَ إِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا مَكِينٌ أَمِينٌ

54. "And the king said: 'Bring him to me. I will attach him to my person.' Then when he had spoken with him, he said: 'Verily today you are of high standing in our presence, a trusted one'."

In Lisan-ul-Arab, an Arabic dictionary, it is said that once a person confides in another person and involves him in his affairs, he applies the phrase: /'istaxlis-hu/ i.e.

'***I will attach him to my person, or take him into my confidence***'.

When Yusuf was in prison, the prison had been depicted as: 'the grave of the living, the house of grief and sorrow, the place of trial for the friends, and the blow upon the faces of the foes.'[1]

As the king realized that Yusuf was reliable and sincere and found no treachery ascribable to him, he took him into his confidence.

The verse says:

"And the king said: 'Bring him to me. I will attach him to my person.'..."

Were Allah not to find any betrayal on the part of the servants, what would He do? Certainly, He would also bring him closer to Himself. That is why that the Qur'an contains such an interpretation and such references for the prophets such as:

"And I myself have chosen you..."[2]

or

"...Verily I have chosen you above the people by My messages and by My speaking..." [3]

By using the word /ladayna/ the king declared that Yusuf had a high position in the hierarchy of his administration requiring all other authorities to obey him. Therefore, if Allah wants to appoint yesterday's prisoner as today's commander He can do so.

The verse says:

"...Then when he had spoken with him, he said: 'Verily today you are of high standing in our presence, a trusted one'."

Explanations

1. Private consultants in the hierarchy of the administration of every country must be men of virtue, good thinkers, able planners and reliable people. (All of which characterized Yusuf).

2. One's defects and vices, as well his virtues, remain secret until he opens his mouth.

3. It is often useful to conduct a personal interview in the selection for every type of job.

4. Give authorization to only those in whom you have confidence.

5. The unbelievers and polytheists are also equally bent on achieving kinds of spiritual perfection. Seeking perfection is an inherent value embedded in human nature.

Being authorized without the necessary qualifications is not possible, because the two are interdependent.

This is because, if one is reliable but is not given any authorization, he would be unable to do anything, while, on the other hand, if one has authorization but lacks honesty and reliability, the interests of the entire public will be jeopardized.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 55

قَالَ اجْعَلْنِي عَلَى خَزَآئِنِ الأَرْضِ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلِيمٌ

55. "He (Yusuf) said: 'Set me over the storehouses of the land. Verily I am a knowing guardian'."

The 'Aziz offered Yusuf (as) the choice of assuming any position in the government he should take the reins of the important affairs to improve them. Yusuf (as) proposed his appointment as the minister responsible for treasures of the country, because he was a trustworthy custodian since he knew that economic injustice was one of the major causes of social disruption.

The verse says:

"He (Yusuf) said: 'Set me over the storehouses of the land. Verily I am a knowing guardian'."

With political power in his hands to affect economic programming, Yusuf would be more able to manage the impending food shortage and could also help the oppressed by reducing their suffering as much as he could, he could reclaim their rights and put an end to the economic mismanagement and anarchy which prevailed in the country.

The Qur'anic sentence: '***Verily I am a knowing guardian'***, shows that administration and administrative ability should be accompanied with faithfulness, and also shows that mere purity and faithfulness are not enough for accepting a sensitive social post, but besides them knowledge, expertness and administrative ability are necessary, too.'

Here are some examples of questions and answers worth noting:

Question: Why did Yusuf (as) make a proposal for a governmental post?

Answer: He discovered that the dream of the king foretold that an imminent danger and hardship was facing the people and he knew that he would be able to prevent it, as well as the undesirable economic events, so he asked for the relevant governmental portfolio in order to carry out this task.

Question: Why did Yusuf (as) utter words of praise for himself? Does not the Qur'an say that one should not praise himself?

The Qur'an says:

"Do not praise yourself."[4]

Answer: Yusuf did not praise himself, he was simply mentioning his suitability for the immense task ahead, which was regulating the dreadful effects of famine and drought. It was not because of ambition or the vain desire to abuse public office.

Question: Why did Yusuf (as) cooperate with an infidel government? Is it not the case that this is forbidden in the Qur'an ?

Answer: Yusuf did not accept this responsibility for that end. On the contrary, he did it to relieve the people from the pressures associated with the period of the famine. He never praised or flattered the regime.

According to the Tafsir f i Zilal il Qur'an, in such hard times, politicians usually abandon their people and flee at the time of danger, but Yusuf stayed to protect the people. If one is unable to overthrow an oppressive regime, or reform it, one must stop degradation and oppression as far as he can, which might include being active in public affairs.

Observing the law of priority in both reason and religion is a basic principle. It might not be admissible to participate in the administrative hierarchy of a government of unbelievers; nevertheless, it is far more desirable if it is a means saving a nation from famine.

According to Tafsir Tibyan, Yusuf (as) did not accept this political position in order to assist an oppressor; neither did he accept a military post, which might make him shed blood illegitimately. He only accepted an economic post in order to rescue the nation from famine.

Imam Rida (as) said that when it was necessary for Yusuf to become the custodian of the treasure in Egypt, he proposed his readiness for the position himself. [5]

Ali ibn Yaqteen also became a minister in the court of the Abbasid Caliphate on the advice of Imam Kazim (as). The mere presence of such men of Allah can be a great haven for the oppressed. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The atonement for a governmental deed is to fulfil the needs of (religious) brothers".[6]

Imam Rida (as) was asked why he accepted to be a successor to the caliphate of Ma`mun. He replied that Yusuf (as), who was a prophet, joined a pagan administration, but the Imam himself, who was the successor to the Prophet (S), had joined the system of someone who claimed to be a Muslim.

His acceptance had been done under duress, while Yusuf's (as) was voluntary because of the importance of the matter.[7]

As soon as Yusuf (as) took office, he did not seek to see his parents, for visiting parents was an emotional matter while rescuing people from famine was a social responsibility.

Imam Sadiq (as) addressing a group of seemingly pious people called them to lead a life of abstemiousness, he said:

"Inform me as to what you think about Yusuf the prophet, who told the king of Egypt: "Set me over the storehouses of the land." His responsibility extended far and wide including as far as the Yemen... At the same time, we do not know of any one who found fault with this engagement of his."[8]

It has been narrated from Imam Rida (as) that Yusuf gathered and stored the wheat during the first seven years.

During the second seven years, when the famine happened, he gradually and carefully distributed them among people for their daily consumption saving the entire country of Egypt from a potential catastrophe in this way.

Throughout those seven years of famine, Yusuf never ate to his fill, lest he might forget those who were nearly starving.[9]

Both the Tafsirs, Majma' ul Bayan, and Al Mizan say that during the first year of the famine, Hadrat Yusuf (as) exchanged wheat for gold and silver. In the second year, he exchanged wheat for gems and jewels.

During its third year, he would exchange wheat for four footed animals, in the fourth year he would exchange wheat for slaves, in the fifth year he exchanged wheat for houses; in the sixth year he exchanged wheat for farms and fields and finally, in the seventh year he exchanged wheat for labor.

When the seventh year came to an end, he addressed the king of Egypt, saying:

"All the people's properties are at my disposal. However, I call Allah to testify and you to bear witness that I liberated all the people and I shall return all their properties to them, I shall also give you back your palace, the throne and your seal. Holding this administrative position was a means for me to save the people and nothing more. You must deal with them with justice."

On hearing these words, the king was so profoundly humbled in the face of such spiritual magnitude that he suddenly uttered the following words:

"I bear witness that there is no Allah but Allah and that you are His messenger. Verily, you are of high standing in our presence, a trusted one."

We must remember that the Qur'anic criteria in selecting individuals do not only include the attributes of guardianship and knowledge, but that we must also take into consideration such attributes as: **Faith,** when the Qur'an says:

"Is he then, who is a believer like him who is a transgressor? They are not equal."[10]

Background: about which the Qur'an says:

"And the foremost are the foremost." "These are they who are drown nigh (to Allah)."[11]

Migration: The Qur'an says:

"...and those who believed but they did not migrate, you have not any friendship towards them until they migrate...."

Mental and bodily ability:

"And He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature"[12]

Nobility in lineage:

"...your father was not a bad man,"[13]

Holy struggle: the Qur'an states:

“Allah has raised the strivers with their wealth and lives in rank above those sitting back.” [14]

Explanations

1. One must volunteer for sensitive positions whenever it is necessary.

2. Eligibility and potential are not incompatible with trust in Allah, piety, and honesty.

3. Out of the attributes which the king used to describe Yusuf (as) saying: high standing, and ‘a trusted one’, and those two attributes which Yusuf uses to describe himself as ‘***knowing***’ ‘***guardian***’, one can deduce that these qualities are the main attributes of the eligible administrators.

They are: ability, reliability, guardianship, and specialization.

4. The position of prophecy practically is not separate from government and politics, because religion is not to be separated from politics.

5. Citizenship is not to be regarded as the principal criterion for governmental administration. Yusuf was not an Egyptian, however he was given the post of an administrator of Egypt, (nationalism of any kind is not acceptable).

6. We must plan ahead for consumption, and in supervision we must always economize and preserve the share belonging to future generations.

Surah Yusuf – Verses 56 – 57

وَكَذٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الأَرْضِ يَتَبَوَّأُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَآءُ نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَن نَّشَآءُ وَلاَ نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

وَلأَجْرُ الأَخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ

56. “And thus did We give power to Yusuf in the land, to make his dwelling there wherever he wished. We reach with Our mercy on whomsoever We please, and We do not waste the reward of the righteous.”
57. “And certainly the reward of the Hereafter is (much) better for those who believe and are constant in keeping from evil.”

In the above two verses, Yusuf (as) has been described as a righteous, pious and true believer.

Throughout this Surah the Divine Will is constantly juxtaposed against the will of man, the latter which, when it goes contrary to the Divine will, always fails in achieving its objective, for example, Yusuf’s brothers had decided to humiliate him by throwing him into the well and getting him enslaved, however,

the ‘Aziz recommended that he be held in high esteem.

The wife of the ‘Aziz intended to seduce him and make him commit sins, but Allah, on the contrary, kept him pure and unblemished. The aristocracy sought to break and destroy him, but Allah granted him a high position in the government of Egypt.

It is for this reason that the Qur’an says:

“And thus did We give power to Yusuf in the land, to make his dwelling there wherever he wished. We reach with Our mercy on whomsoever We please, and We do not waste the reward of the righteous.”

Even if it might seem a long time, Allah will ultimately reward the righteous for He does not disregard any decent act nor allow it to slip into oblivion.

However, besides the reward of this world, the righteous will enjoy some better rewards in Hereafter.

The verse says:

“And certainly the reward of the Hereafter is (***much***) ***better for those who believe and are constant in keeping from evil.”***

1. Majma‘-ul-Bayan, the
2. Surah TaHa, No. 20, verse 13
3. Surah Al-’A‘raf, No. 7, verse 144
4. Surah An-Najm, No. 53, verse 32.
5. Tafsir Nur-ul-Thaqalayn
6. Wasa’il ush-Shi‘ah, vol. 12, p. 139
7. Wasa’il ush-Shi‘ah, vol. 12, p. 146
8. Tafsir Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
9. Tafsirs: Majma‘ ul Bayan.
10. Surah As-Sajdah, No. 32, verse 18.
11. Surah Al-Waqi‘ah, No. 56, verses 10-11
12. Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 247.
13. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 28.
14. Surah Nisa, No. 4, verse 95.

Section 8: Yusuf Measures Out Corn to His Brothers

Surah Yusuf – Verse 58

وَجَآءَ إِخْوَةُ يُوسُفَ فَدَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَعَرَفَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكِرُونَ

58. "And the brothers of Yusuf came and entered unto him, then he knew them but they did not recognize him."

Eventually, as had been predicted, during the first seven consecutive years, agriculture in Egypt thrived due to the abundance of rainfall and water in the Nile River.

After the harvests, Yusuf had ordered the people to reserve the required amount for their needs for themselves and sell the rest to the government, thus the grain stocks were high and the storehouses were filled with food supplies.

Those seven years of affluence and blessings went by, and then famine and drought reared their ugly heads.

The little rain that fell from the sky was not enough to quench the thirst of the palm trees, and the suffering of the people began grew greater and greater as their stockpiles began to run out.

At this point, Yusuf sold them grain on the basis of the schedule which he had preplanned for this emergency and in this way he adequately met all their food requirements.

This drought did not affect Egypt alone; it had affected the countries neighboring Egypt as well, devastating large areas. Thus the people of Palestine and the land of Kan'an northeast of Egypt, where the House of Ya'qub was established, were also affected by the drought.

It was for this reason that Ya'qub decided to send all his children to Egypt to purchase food supplies except Benjamin who stayed with his father. They joined a camel caravan going to Egypt and according to some sources, arrived there after 18 days of travel.

According to historians, foreigners who entered Egypt had to report to the authorities on their arrival, who would inform Yusuf about them. When they reported the arrival of a camel caravan from Palestine, Yusuf quickly recognized his brothers' names among the arrivals and ordered them summoned to his court without letting anyone know who they were.

The verse says:

"And the brothers of Yusuf came and entered unto him, then he knew them but they did not recognize him."

Thirty to forty years had passed since the time they had thrown him into well. The possibility of him

remaining alive was remote, and the last time they had come to Egypt had also been forty yeas before. It is not surprising, therefore, that they would not have recognized their brother when they saw him. Moreover, they did not have the slightest idea that he had become a great ‘Aziz of Egypt.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 59

وَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُم بِجَهَازِهِمْ قَالَ ائْتُونِي بِأَخٍ لَّكُم مِنْ أَبِيكُمْ أَلا تَرَوْنَ أَنّي أُوفِي الْكَيْلَ وَأَنَاْ خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِينَ

59. “And when he provided them with their provisions, he said: ‘Bring unto me a brother of years from your father. Do you not see that I give full measure, and (that) I am the best of hosts?’”

Yusuf was very compassionate and kind towards his brothers. When he was speaking with them, they told him that they were ten brothers from a single father named Ya‘qub, the grandson of ’Ibrahim al Khalil, the great prophet of Allah.

They told him that had he known their father, he would have had more respect for them, but their aged and venerable father was greatly saddened and depressed.

On asking them why their father had been so grief stricken, they replied that he had had a son whom he loved very much and who was the youngest of all his sons. This son had gone hunting and playing with them in the fields and when they had neglected him a wolf came upon him and killed him. Since then, their father had been weeping and grieving for him.

Some commentators have narrated that Yusuf was in the habit of not selling more than one camel load of grain per person, and as the brothers were ten, he sold them ten loads of grain.

On receiving the grain, they said that their father, because of intensive grief, could not travel, as well as a younger brother who had stayed with him to serve him and keep his company, so they asked for a share for those two as well.

Yusuf ordered his men to add to their share, then turning towards them he told them to bring along the younger brother with them as a sign the next time they came back.

The holy Qur’anic says:

“And when he provided them with their provisions, he said: ‘Bring unto me a brother of years from your father…”

Then Yusuf added:

“…Do you not see that I give full measure, and (that) I am the best of hosts?’”

Surah Yusuf – Verse 60

فإِن لَّمْ تَأْتُونِي بِهِ فَلا كَيْلَ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي وَلاَ تَقْرَبُونِ

60. "But if you do not bring him to me you shall have no measure (***of corn***) ***from me nor shall you*** (***even***) ***come near me."***

After words of encouragement and showing his affection and hospitality, he warns them of the consequences; if they did not bring their brother with them the next time, they would get no wheat from him and they would not even be able to get close to him, for bringing their brother would be a proof of good faith in their dealings.

The verse says:

"But if you do not bring him to me you shall have no measure (***of corn***) ***from me nor shall you*** (***even***) ***come near me."***

This was the perfect pretext to get the brothers to bring Benjamin to him. Incidentally, these interpretations make it clear that the buying and selling of grain in Egypt was not commonly done by weight but by volume; and also this shows that Yusuf was, in all respects, a hospitable person.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 61

قَالُوا سَنُرَاوِدُ عَنْهُ أَبَاهُ وإِنَّا لَفَاعِلُونَ

61. "They said: 'We will seek to get him from his father; and verily we certainly will do (***it***)***'."***

In answer to him, the brothers of Yusuf replied him as follows:

"They said: 'We will seek to get him from his father; and verily we certainly will do (***it***)***'."***

They were assured that they could penetrate in father from this point of view and attract his agreement; and it should be so. While they were able to get Yusuf out of the hands of their father by persuasion and insistence, how would they not be able to separate Benjamin from him?

In this regard, they called on their father frequently, begging him and sought to deceive him.

However, the Arabic term /murawidah/ means: frequent referring to someone, accompanying with surge and plot.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 62

وَقَالَ لِفِتْيَانِهِ اجْعَلُوا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ فِي رِحَالِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْرِفُونَهَا إِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَي أَهْلِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

62. "And he told his servants to put their merchandise (with which they had bartered) into their saddle-bags, so that they may recognize it when they return to their family in order that they might come back (again)."

Hadrat Yusuf (as) whose name is synonymous with words such as honesty, generosity and sincerity, would definitely not have given money from the treasury to his father or his brothers. It is highly probable that he had given them back the money for the grain from of his own share and out of his own pocket.

He returned the money to them so that lack of money would not hinder them from coming back. In addition, returning the money was a sign of sincerity, of having no evil intentions with regard to bringing the brother to him, and placing the money among the goods might have been to protect them from theft or robbery and that action can be a sign of non-indebtedness.

Why did not Yusuf introduce himself to his brothers? What prevented him from introducing himself so that his brothers could recognize him more quickly and make it possible for him to return to his father sooner and relieve him of the grief and misery that he had suffered all those years?

Some commentators say that Allah did not allow Yusuf to do this because this separation was a trial for Ya'qub and he was compelled to successfully undergo this period as was ordained by Allah. Before the end of this test, Yusuf was not allowed to introduce himself.

Moreover, if he had immediately introduced himself to his brothers, undesirable reactions might have resulted, among them was that they might have become so fearful that they would not have come back at all presuming that he would take revenge upon them for the past.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 63

فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا إِلَي أَبِيهِمْ قَالُوا يَآ أَبَانَا مُنِعَ مِنَّا الْكَيْلُ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَآ أَخَانَا نَكْتَلْ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

63. "So, when they returned to their father, they said: 'O our father! The measure was denied to us, therefore send our brother with us that we may get our measure; and verily we will certainly guard him'."

Yusuf's brothers then returned to Kan'an rejoicing and well supplied although they were worried that if their father did not give his consent to send Benjamin back with them, the new 'Aziz (Yusuf), would not

receive them and no share would be allocated to them.

Thus, on their return to Kan'an, they told their father that the condition for receiving future supplies of grain would be for him to send Benjamin with them to Egypt.

The above holy verse says:

"So, when they returned to their father, they said: 'O our father! The measure was denied to us, therefore send our brother with us that we may get our measure; and verily we will certainly guard him'."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 64

قَالَ هَلْ ءَأَمَنُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِلاَّ كَمَآ أَمِنتُكُمْ عَلَي أَخِيهِ مِن قَبْلُ فَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ حَافِظاً وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

64. "He said: 'Shall I trust you with him save as I trusted you with his brother before? But Allah is the best guardian, and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful ones'."

The father, who had never forgotten the memory of Yusuf (as), was overwhelmingly upset when he heard these words. Turning to them, he wanted to know whether he could have trusted them as he had trusted them before with Yusuf.

The verse says:

"He said: 'Shall I trust you with him save as I trusted you with his brother before? But Allah is the best guardian, and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful ones'."

Question: In view of the bad record which Ya'qub's sons had, why did he agree to send Benjamin along with them?

Answer: Fakhr Razi has dealt with a number of different possibilities, each of which can eventually provide some kind of justification for Ya'qub's consent.

Firstly, the brothers had not achieved their primary objective which consisted of winning their father's favor.

Secondly, they were less jealous of Benjamin than of Yusuf.

Thirdly, perhaps drought and consequently famine had forced them to make another journey.

Fourthly, decades had passed since the affair with Yusuf and hence it was regarded as something forgotten.

Fifthly, Allah, the Almighty, had inspired Ya'qub with certainty regarding the safety and protection of his son.

And finally, trusting in Allah, Ya'qub once again entrusted Benjamin to his brothers.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 65

وَلَمَّا فَتَحُوا مَتَاعَهُمْ وَجَدُوا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ رُدَّتْ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالُوا يَآ أَبَانَا مَا نَبْغِي هَذِهِ بِضَاعَتُنَا رُدَّتْ إِلَيْنَا وَنَمِيرُ أَهْلَنَا وَنَحْفَظُ أَخَانَا وَنَزْدَادُ كَيْلَ بَعِيرٍ ذَلِكَ كَيْلٌ يَسِيرٌ

65. "And when they opened their baggage, they found their merchandise had been returned to them. They said: 'O our father! What (more) can we desire? This is our merchandise (that) has been returned to us. We shall get provision for our family, and guard our brother. And we shall obtain an extra camel's load. That is an easy measure'."

The Arabic term /namiru/ is derived from the term /mir/ which means food supplies and the phrase /namiru ahlana/ means: 'we provide our family with food'.

One can infer from the sentence "***We shall obtain an extra camel's load***" that the share of each person had been limited to a camel load which would have been allocated to the person (Benjamin) only if he himself had been present.

Once the brothers unloaded their goods, they found that their capital had been returned to them, i.e., all of what they had paid the 'Aziz, was found among their goods.

The verse says:

"And when they opened their baggage, they found their merchandise had been returned to them..."

Feeling that this discovery was decisive evidence to support their proposal, they used it to convince their father to send Benjamin with them, what else could they want? Their capital had been returned to them and the prospect of adding an extra camel load to their goods was an easy matter for the generous 'Aziz.

The verse continues saying:

"...They said: 'O our father! What (more) can we desire? This is our merchandise (that) has been returned to us. We shall get provision for our family, and guard our brother. And we shall obtain an extra camel's load. That is an easy measure'."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 66

قَالَ لَنْ أُرْسِلَهُ مَعَكُمْ حَتَّي تُؤْتُونِ مَوْثِقاً مِنَ اللَّهِ لَتَأْتُنَّنِي بِهِ إِلاَّ أَن يُحَاطَ بِكُمْ فَلَمَّآ ءَاتَوْهُ مَوْثِقَهُمْ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَلَي مَا نَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ

66. "He said: 'Never will I send him with you until you pledge a solemn covenant to me, in Allah's name, that you will surely bring him back to me, unless you are surrounded in (an evil accident).' And when they had sworn their solemn pledge, he said: 'Allah is Guardian over what we say'."

The Arabic term /muiq/ here means that which generates reliability and wins the confidence of the opposite side, it might take the form of a commitment, making an oath or making a sacrifice.

Ya'qub, despite all these incentives was not willing to send his son Benjamin along with them. But their insistence, which was coupled with sound logic, persuaded him to submit to their proposal.

So he finally gave his conditional approval to Benjamin going with them. But they had to swear in Allah's name to return Benjamin to him unless they were rendered powerless in fulfilling their commitment due to death or other unforeseen events.

The verse says:

"He said: 'Never will I send him with you until you pledge a solemn covenant to me, in Allah's name, that you will surely bring him back to me, unless you are surrounded in (an evil accident).'…"

The purpose of this oath (a divine pledge) has been the very covenant and oath which invoked the Divine Name. Only then was he prepared to release Benjamin to them, for it now meant that Allah (s.w.t.) was Guardian and Witness to what they pledged.

The verse says:

"…And when they had sworn their solemn pledge, he said: 'Allah is Guardian over what we say'."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 67

وَقَالَ يَا بَنِيَّ لاَ تَدْخُلُوا مِن بَابٍ وَاحِدٍ وَادْخُلُوا مِنْ أَبْوَابٍ مُّتَفَرِّقَةٍ وَمَآ أُغْنِي عَنكُم مِنَ اللَّهِ مِن شَيْءٍ إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلاَّ لِلَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَعَلَيهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

67. "He also said: 'O' my sons! Do not enter by one gate, but enter by separate gates. Yet I cannot avail you anything against Allah. Judgment belongs no one but Allah. In Him do I put my trust,

and in Him let all that trust put their trust'."

After winning the approval of their father, the brothers got ready to go to Egypt for the second time taking their younger brother along with them.

Ya'qub advised them that they should not all enter by one gate to avoid drawing the attention of the jealous minded and those who did not wish them well, instead, they should enter Egypt through different gates, and thus be safer from the evil intentions of people.

The verse says:

"He also said: 'O' my sons! Do not enter by one gate, but enter by separate gates..."

Nevertheless, he was quick to point out that in the final analysis, it was Allah that was the final Guarantor and Judge, and in Him and only Him should we put our trust, and from Him we must seek help, even when we take precautions.

The verse continues saying:

"...Yet I cannot avail you anything against Allah. Judgment belongs no one but Allah. In Him do I put my trust, and in Him let all that trust put their trust'."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 68

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَهُمْ أَبُوهُم مَّا كَانَ يُغْنِي عَنْهُم مِنَ اللَّهِ مِن شَيْءٍ إِلاَّ حَاجَةً فِي نَفْسِ يَعْقُوبَ قَضَاهَا وَإِنَّهُ لَذُو عِلْمٍ لِمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لاَ يَعْلَمُون

68. "And when they entered in the manner their father had enjoined them, it availed them nothing against Allah; but (it was) a need in Jacob's soul which he so satisfied; and verily he was possessed of a knowledge for that We had taught him, but most people do not know."

The brothers set off from Kan'an and, after covering a long distance, they arrived in Egypt. On their arrival, they acted according to the instructions of their old father and entered through different gates.

The verse says:

"And when they entered in the manner their father had enjoined them..."

This behavior, however, did not have any influence on the Divine will. The only effect mentioned here was that Ya'qub's wishes had been fulfilled.

The verse continues saying:

“…it availed them nothing against Allah; but (*it was*) ***a need in Jacob’s soul which he so satisfied;…”***

Allusion is made to the fact that its sole effect was that it provided comfort for father for he was far away and isolated from all of his sons. He was also concerned about those who would be jealous of them and those who harbored ill will towards them, and being confident that they would put his recommendations into practice, he felt more at ease.

The verse says:

“…and verily he was possessed of a knowledge for that We had taught him, but most people do not know.”

Explanations

1. Bitter experiences educate man, and as a result, he is more inclined to take the words of great men seriously.

2. Even correct calculations and planning are only effective if they are in accordance with the Divine will, once they run contrary to the will of Allah they cannot come into effect.

3. Ya‘qub was aware of some secrets and subjects which he did not deem fit to disclose.

4. The prayers of the men of Allah are always accepted and their needs fulfilled.

5. The knowledge of the prophets has its origin in the Divine knowledge.

6. Most people are only aware of the means and the causes of events and are ignorant of Allah’s authority and the need for putting all their hopes and trust in Him.

Section 9: Yusuf Meets His Brother

Surah Yusuf – Verse 69

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَي يُوسُفَ ءَاوَي إِلَيْهِ أَخَاهُ قَالَ إِنّي أَنَاْ أَخُوكَ فَلاَ تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

69. “And, when they entered unto Yusuf, he lodged his (*own*) ***brother*** (*Benyamin*) ***with himself, saying: ‘I am your brother; so do not grieve at what they were doing’.”***

According to the narrations, when Ya'qub's (as) sons arrived in Egypt, Yusuf hosted them and ordered a table full of various foods for every couple of them.

Benjamin remained seated alone, so Yusuf seated him near himself, then he allocated every two persons for one room and made Benjamin his roommate.

While together, Benjamin talked about the infidelities of the brothers and the crimes which they had committed the years before against their brother, Yusuf.

At this moment Yusuf, who had become impatient, exclaimed:

"*Stop worrying! I am that very Yusuf*!"

He uttered these words so emphatically "*Indeed, I am your brother!*" that it left no possibility of doubt in the truth of his words.

The verse says:

"And, when they entered unto Yusuf, he lodged his (own) brother (Benyamin) with himself, saying: 'I am your brother; so do not grieve at what they were doing'."

As for the concept of the sentence: "***So do not grieve at what they were doing***", there are two possibilities worth consideration.

The first is that Benjamin should stop getting depressed about the past conduct of his brothers.

The second is that it is probable that the plan which was to be put into practice by his slaves for Benjamin's own goods i.e., placing the cup among the loads in order for him to stay with him, should not be a reason for worry.

Explanations

1. The brothers who boasted of their power the previous day, claiming that they were a powerful group, had to undergo a significant amount of humiliation in order to secure their food supplies.
They practically had to kiss Yusuf's threshold in a humiliating manner.

2. When a blessing is obtain, the concerning former afflictions should be renounced

(Yusuf and Benjamin had a face to face meeting then they forgot their past sorrows.)

3. Before the execution of any plan and project, the innocent must be spiritually ready and must clearly know the justification for the action. Benjamin was told that he would be kept in Egypt under the pretext of being discovered as a thief to which he agreed.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 70

فَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُم بِجَهَازِهِمْ جَعَلَ السِّقَايَةَ فِي رَحْلِ أَخيهِ ثُمَّ أَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ أَيَّتُهَا الْعِيرُ إِنَّكُمْ لَسَارِقُونَ

70. "Then, when he provided them with their provisions, he put the drinking cup into his brother's saddle-bag. Then a herald shouted: 'O you men of the caravan! You are certainly thieves!'"

The Arabic term /siqayah/ refers to a container out of which one drinks water. The word /rahl/ means a pouch or saddle-bag which is loaded onto a camel. The term /'ir/ means: a caravan of camels which carries food supplies.

This incident is the fruit of one of two creative plans which Yusuf designed. In the first instance he hid the brothers' capital among the load of grain so that they might once again return. This time, he planted the precious cup in his brother's saddlebag in order to retain him in Egypt as a deposit. It says:

"Then, when he provided them with their provisions, he put the drinking cup into his brother's saddle-bag. Then a herald shouted: 'O you men of the caravan! You are certainly thieves!'"

Some Islamic narrations say that during the meeting between Benjamin and Yusuf, the latter asked Benjamin if he would like to stay with him. Benjamin said that he would, but he mentioned that his father had gotten his brothers to swear to return him to their father.

Yusuf replied that he would devise a plan for him to stay.

Question: Why were these innocent people accused of theft?

Answer: Benjamin, with full understanding, declared his approval of the scheme for him to stay with his brother Yusuf. Although his other brothers became them briefly upset and desperate because of the accusation, they were acquitted after an inspection.

In addition, Yusuf's agents were unaware that he had planted the cup in his brother's saddlebag, so they naturally proclaimed that the brothers were thieves.

Even if Yusuf had said that they were thieves, still there would have been no problem, since, according to Imam Sadiq (as), what they had stolen was not specified, and the meaning of thieves applied to them really meant that they had stolen Yusuf from his father.

In the story, no one said that they had stolen the cup, but that it was lost. Thus they were thieves, the thieves of Yusuf, not the thieves of the cup.[1]

The Prophet (S) has said: that he who tells a white lie in order to reform or to remove conflict between others is not counted as a lie. It was then that he recited this verse.[2]

Explanations

It is permitted to fabricate scenes in order to discover an offence[3], and for the sake of superior objectives it is also admissible to attribute theft to an innocent man who has agreed to play the role of the thief.[4]

If there is one wrongdoer in a group, people will often hold the whole group responsible.

"O you men of the caravan! You are certainly thieves."

Surah Yusuf – Verses 71 - 72

قَالُوا وَأَقْبَلُوا عَلَيْهِم مَّاذَا تَفْقِدُونَ

قَالُوا نَفْقِدُ صُوَاعَ الْمَلِكِ وَلِمَن جَآءَ بِهِ حِمْلُ بَعِيرٍ وَأَنَاْ بِهِ زَعِيمٌ

71. "They said, while turning to them: 'What is it that you have lost?'"
72. "They said: 'We have lost the king's cup, and whoever brings it shall receive (the reward of) a camel-load, and I guarantee it'."

The Arabic terms /suwa'/ and /siqayah/ are often used with same sense, meaning a vessel out of which water was drunk and which was also used to measure out quantities of wheat.[5] This term illustrates the efficiency, and enjoyment of a single device that encompasses a wide range of functions.

The Arabic word /himl/ means a load while /haml/ means a load that is hidden, such as rain which is hidden within the clouds or the child in its mother's womb.

The Qur'anic sentence saying: 'whoever brings it shall receive (the reward of) a camel's load', in the literature of Islamic jurisprudence, is known as /ju'alah/ or /ji'alah/ (wage) which has precedence in terms of legal credibility.

It says:

"They said, while turning to them: 'What is it that you have lost?'"

"They said: 'We have lost the king's cup, and whoever brings it shall receive (the reward of) a camel-load..."

The speaker of this statement, for a more emphasis, said:

"...and I guarantee it'."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 73

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُم مَّا جِئْنَا لِنُفْسِدَ فِي الأَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا سَارِقِينَ

73. "They said: 'By Allah! You know well (that) we have not come to make mischief in the land, and we are not thieves'."

The brothers, disturbed by these words, were not aware of the roots of the problem. In their reply, they seem certain that the Egyptian authorities knew that they were not the type to steal.

The verse says:

"They said: 'By Allah! You know well (that) we have not come to make mischief in the land, and we are not thieves'."

This statement of the brothers shows that probably the Egyptians had a record of their previous transactions; and now the travelers said that they had declared their readiness to return the capital that was hidden among their supplies on the previous trip.

So how could those who, returning from a remote country to give back the capital found amongst their supplies be guilty of stealing? Moreover, it is said that on their arrival in Egypt, they had firmly closed the mouths of their camels with bridles so that they would not graze on other's farms or do any damage to fields.

How would they commit such an ugly vice?

Explanations

1. Having a clean record is a powerful argument for exoneration from suspicion.

2. Burglary and theft are examples of corruption on the earth.

A country should monitor the arrival and departure of foreign travelers especially in times of crisis to be sure about their intentions.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 74

قَالُوا فَمَا جَزَآؤُهُ إِن كُنتُم كَاذِبِينَ

74. "They said: 'What is the penalty thereof, if you are liars?'"

The punishment inflicted upon thieves has varied among different nations due to differences in their living standards.

Theft is a major crime that causes economic disruption and social insecurity; as such it has been always cited as a crime in all legal statutes and customs in all parts of the world. The penalty prescribed for theft has been as varied as the civilizations and cultures of the world.

In Egypt, which was very affluent at that time, the penalty for theft consisted of lashes and imprisonment. In Palestine, on the other hand, the penalty was that the thief would be put into bondage commensurate with the amount he had stolen, because theft was a transgression against the people's rights and had economical motives.

Thus the import of the question posed, i.e., the penalty if they were proven to be liars and had stolen the cup, is that the brothers would have to choose between the Egyptian and Palestinian penalties.

Anyway, it seems that the questioner was Hadrat Yusuf himself since he knew that the brothers would accept judgment according to the regulations and laws of Kan'an which is exactly what he had anticipated they would choose.

The verse says:

"They said: 'What is the penalty thereof, if you are liars?'"

Surah Yusuf – Verse 75

قَالُوا جَزَآؤُهُ مَن وُجِدَ فِي رَحْلِهِ فَهُوَ جَزَآؤُهُ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ

75. "They said: 'The penalty thereof is that he in whose bag it is found shall himself be (***held as bondsman***) ***in penalty for it. Thus do we punish the unjust'."***

Tribes in the past used to punish thieves by putting them into servitude.[6] And there is no exceptions or discrimination in law, whoever was found to be a thief would be enslaved. Of course, the retribution of a wrongdoer in a foreign country can often be decided according to the laws of his country.

Thus in Egypt the guilty could be judged by the laws of his land and not according to the laws of the host country. The Qur'an sees theft as an outstanding instance of oppression and thus in the noble verse it calls the thief an 'unjust' one.

The verse says:

"They said: 'The penalty thereof is that he in whose bag it is found shall himself be (***held as bondsman***) ***in penalty for it. Thus do we punish the unjust'."***

Since the law in Kan'an was that the thief must lose his freedom in servitude, the brothers said that his penalty was the same one in whose load it was found; i.e., the thief himself would be its penalty (prevention). Yusuf had achieved his objective which was to detain his brother.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 76

فَبَدَأَ بِأَوْعِيَتِهِمْ قَبْلَ وِعَآءِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهَا مِن وِعَآءِ أَخِيهِ كَذَلِكَ كِدْنَا لِيُوسُفَ مَا كَانَ لِيَأْخُذَ أَخَاهُ فِي دِينِ الْمَلِكِ إِلاَّ أَن يَشَآءَ اللَّهُ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَن نَّشَآءُ وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ

76. "And so he began** (**the search**) **with their bags before the bag of his brother. Then he drew it out from his brother's bag. Thus did We contrive for Yusuf's sake; for he could not take his brother in accordance with the king's law, except that Allah willed. We raise the degrees of whomsoever We please, and above everyone endued with knowledge, there is one more knowing."

At this moment, Yusuf ordered everything to be unloaded and each load to be examined separately. However, in order not to make them suspicious, he examined the loads of the brothers before examining Benjamin's load from which he produced the 'stolen cup'.

The verse says:

"And so he began** (**the search**) **with their bags before the bag of his brother. Then he drew it out from his brother's bag..."

As soon as the cup was discovered, the brothers were extremely astonished and a mountain of grief and despair overtook them. Their brother had apparently committed theft, which was a blow to their reputation, a matter which would jeopardize their standing with the 'Aziz.

And what answer would they give their father? How could he believe that it was not their fault this time?

Then the Qur'an adds that this was how Allah contrived the matter for Yusuf's sake in order that he would keep his brother with him in a manner that other brothers could not resist. The important problem was that Yusuf could not retain his brother by the law of the king except that Binyamin would be beaten and put in prison.

That was why he made the brothers confess what the retribution of theft was if one of them would commit it. They answered that according to the tradition of their land the thief himself would be kept.

The verse says:

"...Thus did We contrive for Yusuf's sake; for he could not take his brother in accordance with the

king’s law, except that Allah willed…”

This verse indicates that Yusuf’s actions according to the laws and traditions of his brothers’ own land, was performed according to the Divine command. This was a plan that protected his brother, provided a test for his father, Ya‘qub, and was an evaluation of his other brothers as well.

In the end, after every test, there is an elevation in rank for those who have the merit. This rank is achieved by going through tests just as Yusuf had successfully done.

Nevertheless, regardless of whatever rank we achieve, there will always be someone superior in knowledge comparing some others. In the hierarchy of knowledge, Allah is at the peak because His knowledge is infinite and is not confined.

The verse says:

“…We raise the degrees of whomsoever We please, and above everyone endued with knowledge, there is one more knowing.”

Surah Yusuf – Verse 77

قَالُوا إِن يَسْرِقْ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ أَخٌ لَّهُ مِن قَبْلُ فَأَسَرَّهَا يُوسُفُ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا لَهُمْ قَالَ أَنتُمْ شَرٌّ مَّكَاناً وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَصِفُونَ

77. “They said: ‘If he steals, a brother of his had stolen before.’ But Yusuf kept it secret within his heart and did not reveal it to them. He said: ‘You are in a worse situation, and Allah knows best (***the truth***) ***of what you state’.”***

The brothers eventually came to the conclusion that their brother Benjamin was a thief and his reputation would ruin their supposedly good relations with the ‘Aziz.

Thus, in order to distance themselves from him, they attributed it to a family trait in so far that his brother Yusuf, like him, who was of the same mother, had also been a thief. They both, on the other hand, should be treated differently because they themselves were from another mother.

The verse says:

“They said: ‘If he steals, a brother of his had stolen before.’…”

On hearing such words, Yusuf became very saddened but he kept it to himself and did not reveal his feelings or his opinion. Even though they had committed the great sin of false attribution and slander he did not answer them. He just went on to tell them in very subtle terms that they had sunk far lower than the brother they had so unjustly accused.

The verse says:

"...But Yusuf kept it secret within his heart and did not reveal it to them. He said: 'You are in a worse situation, and Allah knows best (***the truth***) ***of what you state'."***

Surah Yusuf – Verse 78

قَالُوا يَآ أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ إِنَّ لَهُ أَباً شَيْخاً كَبِيراً فَخُذْ أَحَدَنَا مَكَانَهُ إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

78. "They said: 'O' 'Aziz! He has a father, aged and advanced in years, so take one of us in his place; verily we see you of the doers of good'."

As they realized that in accord with the penalty to which they themselves had agreed, their younger brother Benjamin would have to stay with the 'Aziz and that they had made a pledge with their father to do their utmost to protect and return him safely to Ya'qub, they pleaded with Yusuf who was yet unknown to them to take one of them instead.

The verse says:

"They said: 'O' 'Aziz! He has a father, aged and advanced in years, so take one of us in his place;..."

They explained the reason of their request that they had realized the 'Aziz one of the righteous and that was not the first time that he showed them kindness, then it was better to complete his affection by according their request.

The verse says:

"...verily we see you of the doers of good'."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 79

قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ أَن نَّأْخُذَ إِلاَّ مَن وَجَدْنَا مَتَاعَنَا عِندَهُ إِنَّآ إِذاً لَظَالِمُونَ

79. "He said: 'Allah forbid that we take (***anyone***) ***other than him with whom we found our property. Indeed*** (***if we did so***) ***we would certainly be of the unjust ones'."***

Yusuf immediately turned down this proposal, implying that a just person will never punish an innocent man for an offence which had been committed by someone else. To do such a thing would make one an oppressor.

The verse says:

"He said: 'Allah forbid that we take** (**anyone**) **other than him with whom we found our property. Indeed** (**if we did so**) **we would certainly be of the unjust ones'."

It is interesting to note that Yusuf never uses the word thief to refer to his brother, on the contrary, he says "***him with whom we have found our property***". This is one of the signs indicating that he was careful to use no offensive language in all of his life.

Explanations

1. It is necessary for everyone to observe regulations and rules and breaking them is forbidden even for the 'Aziz.

2. Breaking just laws is an act of oppression. One must not break laws at the behest of this and that person.

3. The innocent must not be held responsible and suffer the consequences for what someone else had done even when he consents to do so.

1. Tafsir Nur-uth-Thaqalayn: This case is idiomatically referred to as /tauriyah/ (homonomy)which implies that the speaker has an objective in mind which differs from the aim of the addressee. That is if the object meaning of 'the caller' in the verse is Yusuf this 'tauriyah' is correct. And Allah alone knows.
2. Tafsir Nur-uth-Thaqalayn.
3. It is just like films and theatrical performances which show people as guilty and summoned to court and addressed as such. They however, accept to play the role as culprits with their own consent.
4. Tafsir Al Mizan vol. 11, p. 244
5. In Tafsir Atyab-ul-Bayan, it is asserted that it is a container the volume of which is equal to about 3 kg of wheat.
6. According to Majma' ul Bayan the term of servitude was for one year.

Section 10: Yusuf Discloses His Identity

Surah Yusuf – Verse 80

فَلَمَّا اسْتَيْأَسُوا مِنْهُ خَلَصُوا نَجِيّاً قَالَ كَبِيرُهُم أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا اَنَّ أَبَاكُمْ قَدْ أَخَذَ عَلَيْكُم مَوْثِقاً مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمِن قَبْلُ مَا فَرَّطْتُمْ فِي يُوسُفَ فَلَنْ أَبْرَحَ الأَرْضَ حَتَّي يَأْذَنَ لِي أَبِي أَوْ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ لِي وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ

80. "So when they despaired of** (**moving**) **him, they conferred in private. The eldest of them said: 'Don't you know that your father has taken a solemn covenant from you in Allah's name, and

before that you failed to perform your duty with Yusuf? Therefore, I will never leave this land until my father permits me, or Allah decides for me; and He is the best of judges'."

The brothers were faced with the prospect of returning to their father in shame. They did their utmost to save Benjamin, however they found all roads leading to a solution blocked.

Therefore, they despaired from the 'Aziz, or from deliverance of the brother, and decided to return to kan'an and tell their father about the matter when they went off by themselves into a corner and conferred as to what next to do.

The verse says:

"So when they despaired of (moving) him, they conferred in private..."

However, in that private conference the elder brother told them whether they did not know that their father had taken an oath of Allah from them that they had to return Benjamin in any possible price, and that they were the same persons who formerly failed to fulfil their duty concerning Yusuf, and had a bad background with the Father.

The verse says:

"...The eldest of them said: 'Don't you know that your father has taken a solemn covenant from you in Allah's name, and before that you failed to perform your duty with Yusuf?..."

The older brother, who embarrassed and frustrated at their unreliability with their father, decided to stay in Egypt until his father permitted or until Allah (s.w.t.) decided.

The holy verse continues saying:

"...Therefore, I will never leave this land until my father permits me, or Allah decides for me; and He is the best of judges'."

The decision of Allah means either until death overtook him or that Allah (s.w.t.) would make manifest a solution to this problem; or a plausible excuse which could decisively accepted by father.

Explanations

1. The Arabic term /xalasu/ means separating themselves away from others. The Qur'anic word /najiyyan/ means to enter into a whispered conversation with someone. Therefore, the phrase /xalasu najiyyan/ means that they gathered together apart from others, for a confidential meeting to decide on what to do.

2. Pleas and requests should not hinder one from executing Divine commands and implementing decisive plans in that respect.

3. In cases where one is a culprit in major disasters and unpleasant matters, the elders are more responsible and the more shameful they seem.

4. Treachery and crime hurt the conscience of good people throughout their lives.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 81

ارْجِعُوا إِلَي أَبِيكُمْ فَقُولُوا يَآ أَبَانَا إِنَّ ابْنَكَ سَرَقَ وَمَا شَهِدْنَآ إِلاَّ بِمَا عَلِمْنَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِلْغَيْبِ حَافِظِينَ

81. "Go back to your father and say: 'O' father! Verily your son has committed theft, and we did not bear witness except to what we knew, and we were not guardians of the Unseen'."

Then the elder brother told other brothers that they would return to the Father and say that his son (Benjamin) committed theft and that the testimony they would present to their father could only be based on the amount of the truth that they were aware of.

They saw the king's cup discovered and taken out from their brother's load which proved that he had committed theft. Nevertheless, they started to become aware that the hidden truth of the matter rested with Allah.

The verse says:

"Go back to your father and say: 'O' father! Verily your son has committed theft, and we did not bear witness except to what we knew, and we were not guardians of the Unseen'."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 82

وَاسْأَلِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا وَالْعِيرَ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا فِيهَا وإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ

82. "And ask at the town in which we were and the caravan with which we travelled hither, and verily we are indeed truthful."

The Arabic term /qaryah/ does not only mean 'village ', but it also means 'a meeting place' and 'a residential area' as well, whether be it a town or a village.

Yusuf's brothers did not have any evidence to prove that he was killed by a wolf when they described the event for their father, but they provided two proofs to support their story in this situation. Firstly they had witnesses in the town, and secondly, they had witnesses in the caravan among which they were.

Besides that, in the former description they said: ***"...even though we be truthful"***[1] where the Arabic

word /lau/ is a sign of doubt, weakness, and anxiety, while here, in this verse, they say: ***"…verily we are indeed truthful"*** that, with the application of '***verily***' and '***indeed***', they claimed that they were really truthful.

Then, in order to make clear their father from any suspicion and to make him sure that the fact had been exactly that very thing they explained, they said:

"And ask at the town in which we were and the caravan with which we travelled hither…"

This statement means that there were naturally some people from Kan'an among them whom Jacob knew and he could ask the true affair from them so that, however, he would become certain that they were telling nothing but the truth.

It says:

"…and verily we are indeed truthful."

They were very confident in their position, they were sure that if the father were to investigate he would find that they were indeed telling the truth.

From the verse, we can also deduce that the news that Benjamin had stolen the king's cup spread around the town and among the caravan.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 83

قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنفُسُكُمْ أَمْراً فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ عَسَي اللَّهُ أَن يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِم جَمِيعاً إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

83. "He (Ya'qub) said: 'No, but your (guilty) selves have made a matter fair for you, so patience is good. Maybe Allah will bring them to me all together; verily He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise'."

The brothers departed from Egypt, leaving the youngest and the oldest behind, they returned to Kan'an in frustration and shame. On this occasion, contrary to other times, their father found them deeply disturbed and depressed and that Benjamin and the oldest brother were not with them, thus he realized that something unpleasant had taken place.

In order to remove their father's suspicions and increase his confidence in them, this time they told the truth of the matter as it had appeared to them, calling him to inquire from the people of Egypt and the caravan to verify their story.

Ya'qub was not impressed, he became angry, and staring at them, he told them that it was their souls that had made something appealing to them that had led to this disaster.

The verse says:

"He (Ya'qub) said: 'No, but your (guilty) selves have made a matter fair for you…"

On his part Ya'qub had no other choice than to take recourse in sweet patience and trust in Allah to return all his sons to him, if He willed, because He is aware of them inside of all as well as whatever happened and will happen. Moreover, He is Wise and never does anything undue.

The holy verse continues saying:

"…so patience is good. Maybe Allah will bring them to me all together; verily He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise'."

Explanations

1- When the brothers, feigning sadness, brought Yusuf's bloody shirt to their father, they said that Yusuf had been eaten by a wolf. Hadrat Ya'qub (as) said that their souls had made up something which they had found attractive.

Now, with his next two sons taken away from him, he repeats the same sentence. Perhaps, this question may be raised that: in Yusuf's affair the brothers committed treason and planned conspiracies, while in the Benjamin's affair, such was not the case.

Then, why does Ya'qub say the same thing in both cases? Tafsir Al Mizan, provides the answer. 'Allamah Tabataba'i says that Ya'qub meant that the facts surrounding these two other brothers remaining in Egypt is an extension of their previous conduct with regard to Yusuf (as).

That is, all these occurrences, even though they were not directly responsible for the last one, were the consequences of their previous unethical behaviour.

It may be said that the purpose of Ya'qub was that even then they thought themselves as innocent and that they had acted well, however, they had still behaved unethically in the crisis.

Firstly why were they quick to assume that their brother was guilty once they saw the cup among his load? Couldn't it be possible that someone else had hidden it there?

Secondly, why did they return so quickly without any research? And thirdly, why did they choose servitude as a penalty of the thief?

2- One's selfish ego seeks to present evil acts as beautiful to itself in order to justify guilt.

3- Maintaining patience is a practice prevalent among the men of Allah and a good patience in a believer is the kind that one surrenders oneself to Allah without complaining about His Will.

4- One must never despair of Allah’s omnipotence.

“Maybe Allah will bring them to me,”

5- Solving old and new problems are both alike once the issue in question is Allah’s will. Allah is able to bring together in one place yesterday’s Yusuf and today’s brother after many years.

6- A devout believer regards bitter events as having their origin in Allah’s Providence as well.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 84

وَتَوَلَّي عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَآ أَسَفَي عَلَي يُوسُفَ وَابْيَضَّتْ عَينَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيم

84. “And he turned away from them and said: ‘Alas for Yusuf!’ And his eyes became white with the grief of that he repressed.”

The Arabic word /’asaf/ philologically means grief and sorrow accompanied with wrath. Ya‘qub constantly had some tear in his eyes, the word ‘what a pity!’ on his tongue, and grief in his heart.

Imam Baqir (as) has been narrated who said in a tradition that his father Ali-ibn-il-Husayn, even twenty years after the event of Karbala, used to weep upon any ground. Once he was asked why he wept such a great deal.

He answered:

“Ya‘qub had eleven sons one of whom disappeared, although he was alive Ya‘qub lost his eye-sight for him, while I saw by my own eyes that my father, my brothers and seventeen men from the house-hold of the Prophet (S) were slain as martyr before my eyes. How may I not weep?”

However, a deep sorrow and grief occupied throughout the entity of Ya‘qub, and the absence of Benjamin, the same son who was a cause of solace for him, reminded him of his dear Yusuf.

The remembrance of the time this fair, intelligent, faithful, fair young son was close in his bosom and a moment of the smelling of whose smelt refreshed the father as new life for him.

But now, not only there was no sign of him, but also his substitute, Benjamin, had an important painful fate like him. It was at this moment that he showed reaction as follows:

“And he turned away from them and said: ‘Alas for Yusuf!’...”

This double grief caused Ya‘qub (as) to shed flood of tears involuntarily as much as that his eyes lost its sight.

The verse continues saying:

"…And his eyes became white with the grief of that he repressed."

He was very sad, yet he tried to control his grief and anger patiently, so that he would say nothing contrast to the Will of Allah.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 85

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ تَفْتَؤُاْ تَذْكُرُ يُوسُفَ حَتَّي تَكُونَ حَرَضاً أَوْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْهَالِكِينَ

85. "They said: 'By Allah! You will never cease to remember Yusuf until you are ill or (until) you are of the perished ones'."

The Arabic term /harad/ refers to a person who grieves to death out of love or sorrow.

The brothers, who were over whelmed by sorrow as a result of this sequence of events, had a troubled conscience because of Yusuf's affair and now they were finding themselves being tried anew with regard to Benjamin while they were profoundly hurt at the ever increasing sadness of their father.

With inconvenience they addressed the Father, and as the verse says:

"They said: 'By Allah! You will never cease to remember Yusuf until you are ill or (until) you are of the perished ones'."

Explanations

1. The ideal love is spiritual and the heavenly sighs of grief which are of valuable import. The thinking of the men of Allah is identical with the thinking of Allah Himself.

2. The issue of paternal love is different from ordinary kinds of love.

3. Spiritual and psychic problems leave their impact on the body, among which one can name the separation from a loved one which might cause a nervous break-down or even death.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 86

قَالَ إِنَّمَآ أَشْكُوا بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَي اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لا تَعْلَمُونَ

86. "He said: 'I only complain of my anguish and my grief to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you do not know'."

Ya‘qub declared that he used to relate his grief, his need, his life problems and his difficulties to Allah in the dark of night and in private times; and some commentators have said that /ba/ means an expression of grief while the word /huzn/ signifies hiding and covering one's grief.

The verse says:

"He said: 'I only complain of my anguish and my grief to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you do not know'."

The Prophet of Allah (S) has been narrated to have said that Gabriel came to visit Ya‘qub and said:

"Allah sends His greetings to you and says that you should be of good cheer that He swears upon His Glory and Magnanimity that if those two sons were dead He would return their lives to them. Now you should prepare some food for the poor, those who are Allah's most favorite servants."

From then on, whenever Ya‘qub wanted to have a meal, he would order someone to call any poor man outside his home that was hungry could come inside and share his meal with him.

And when he was fasting, he would order someone to proclaim outside his house that whoever was fasting could come in and join him in breaking his fast with him. This narration has been quoted by Hakim Abu ‘Abdullah Hafiz in his Sahih.

The sentence "***and I know from Allah that which you do not know***", means that Ya‘qub well knew that Yusuf's dream would come true, that he was alive and according to the dream he saw they would soon prostrate before him.

In the book entitled 'An-Nubuwwah' (The Prophethood) documented from Sadir Siyrafi, Imam Baqir (as) is narrated to have said that Ya‘qub prayed for Allah to send the Angel of Death to him, and when the latter came to Ya‘qub, the angel asked him what he could do for him. Ya‘qub asked him if he had seen the spirit of Yusuf among those that he had taken.

He answered he had not, so Ya‘qub realized that Yusuf was still alive.

Messages to Note

1. A monotheist shares his secrets and his hidden troubles only with Allah.

2. There are two vicious and heinous attributes regarding human beings: The silence which rules and reigns over one's heart and nerves, exerting pressure on them and jeopardizing one's health. The other one is crying and moaning in front of people which diminishes ones honor, and lowers the chances of success.

The best action in this regard is to take one's complaint to Allah.

3. There lies in a dialogue or a discussion with Allah such a great pleasure which cannot be understood by ordinary people.

4. Superficial people usually pass by events easily. However thoughtful people follow events until their outcome in the Hereafter.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 87

يَا بَنِيَّ اذْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِن يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلا تَيْأَسُوا مِن رَّوْحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لا يَيْأَسُ مِن رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلاَّ الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

87. "O' my sons! Go and enquire about Yusuf and his brother, and never despair of Allah's Mercy. Verily none despairs of Allah's Mercy except the unbelieving people."

The Arabic term /tahassus/ means searching for something good by using one's senses, while the Arabic term /tajassus/ means to search for bad things.

According to Raqib, both the terms /rauh/ and /ruh/ mean spirit, but the word /rauh/ is used when there is a relief and favor in question. It seems, by the removal of difficulties a new and fresh spirit emerges in man.

In Tafsir-i-Tibyan it is said that the word /ruh/ (spirit) is derived from /rih/ (wind). As man feels comfortable when the wind blows, he feels happy once he has the Divine Grace.

The famine, however, continued to strike hard in Egypt and in the surrounding areas, including Kan'an. Once again Ya'qub ordered his sons to go to Egypt and procure the food supplies necessary; but this time, the search for Yusuf and his brother Benjamin were placed at the top of the list of priorities.

Jacob said:

"O' my sons! Go and enquire about Yusuf and his brother…"

The brothers were sure that Yusuf was no longer alive, so the advice of their old father astonished them greatly. He reminded them that they should never despair of Divine grace for that was a sign of unbelief. Allah's mercy can remove all difficulties.

Ya'qub continued saying:

"…and never despair of Allah's Mercy. Verily none despairs of Allah's Mercy except the unbelieving people."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 88

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوا يآ أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ مَسَّنَا وَأَهْلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَجِئْنَا بِبِضَاعَةٍ مُّزْجَاةٍ فَأَوْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَآ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ

88. "Then, when they entered unto him (Yusuf), they said: 'O' 'Aziz! Affliction has visited us and our family, and we have brought scanty merchandise. So pay us full measure and bestow you charity on us; verily Allah will reward the charitable ones'."

So once again the sons of Ya'qub loaded up their goods and, for the third time, they headed for Egypt, a land that had been full of adventures for them.

The verse says:

"Then, when they entered unto him (Yusuf), they said: 'O' 'Aziz! Affliction has visited us and our family, and we have brought scanty merchandise. So pay us full measure and bestow you charity on us; verily Allah will reward the charitable ones'."

This time, however, they entered Egypt feeling embarrassed and ashamed, because, contrary to their other trips, their past record had been badly damaged with the 'Aziz and it is probable that some people now considered them as the thieves of Kan'an.

The only thing which was their source of comfort among the host of difficulties and their exasperating troubles was the advice their father gave them; that they should not despair of Allah's mercy, for solving any difficulty was an easy matter for Him.

The Arabic term /bida'at/ refers to a property in the form of a price. The Qur'anic term /muzjat/ is derived from /'izja'/ with the sense of 'casting out'. When salesmen return the money to the customer when it is less than the required amount, they call it: /bida'tun muzjat/.

Some commentators have claimed that the meaning of "***bestow you charity on us***" is a request for Benjamin's return, but most of the other commentators believe that it is a request for wheat itself.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 89

قَالَ هَلْ عَلِمْتُم مَّا فَعَلْتُم بِيُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ إِذْ أَنتُمْ جَاهِلُونَ

89. "He (Yusuf) said: 'did you know what you did with Yusuf and his brother when you were ignorant?''"

A question can be the product of many objectives which can be positive and constructive or negative and disturbing. Perhaps Yusuf's objective in asking this question was to let them know that he knew the whole story. Another possible objective could be that he wanted them to know that they did wrong and that they had to repent.

In any rate, at that moment when the period of trial had ended, and Yusuf also seemed terribly anxious and restless, in order to introduce himself, turned to the brothers and began as follows:

"He** (**Yusuf**) **said: 'did you know what you did with Yusuf and his brother when you were ignorant?'"

Yusuf, the 'Aziz, finished his speaking while he was smiling. His smile showed his beautiful teeth to his brothers quite manifestly. Once they noticed them, realized that they were amazingly similar to the teeth of their brother Yusuf.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 90

قَالُوا أَءِنَّكَ لأَنتَ يُوسُفُ قَالَ أَنَاْ يُوسُفُ وَهَذآ أَخِي قَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَآ إِنَّهُ مَن يَتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

90. "They said: 'Are you indeed Yusuf?' He said: ' (***Yes***)***, I am Yusuf and this is my brother. Allah has been indeed gracious to us. Verily whoever keeps from evil and is patient*** (***is always rewarded***) ***for verily Allah does not waste the reward of the righteous'."***

The more the time passed the more the brothers were astonished at why the 'Aziz wept upon their father's letter and how he knew the story of Yusuf. They thought his feature was very alike to that of Yusuf; perhaps he was the same Yusuf.

They decided to ask this question from him. If he was not Yusuf they would not be considered as mad; but if he was Yusuf what they could do with shame. Excitement had encompassed them thoroughly. At last, they broke their silence by asking whether he was Yusuf.

The verse says:

"They said: 'Are you indeed Yusuf?'..."

What happened here in this scene? Which painter can draw in a painting the feature of shame, happiness, weeping, and embracing? Only Allah knows it and none else.

The conditions should be in a state that people ask, and the stimuli increase in them for development and guidance. The stimulus for research and questions ceaselessly increase in Yusuf's brothers. They

said to themselves why he persisted on bringing Benjamin with them.

Why was the king's cup found in the loads? Why did he return their money first time they bought wheat? Where from did he know the story of Yusuf? Would he not give them wheat again? When this excitement went to its climax, they asked him whether he was Yusuf and he answered: 'Yes'.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*"There is indeed a course of Yusuf in Hadrat Gha'im (as)... People will not recognize him (as) until when Allah will allow him to introduce himself."*2

Explanations

1. The length of time in history containing bitter and sweet events can change the relations and comprehensions and cognitions.

2. It is true that the people's obligation is bitter, but the obligation of Allah is sweet.

3. The men of Allah believe that all bounties belong to Him.

4. Patience and virtue pave the ground for one's honor.

5. Allah's grace is wisely distributed and is allocated according to the well established criteria.

6. That person is eligible for an administrative position and who must have passed the tests of crises, jealousies, titles, lusts, humiliations, imprisonments, and slander.

7. One must make use of sensitive periods to inform and propagate. Once the brothers' sense of shame was aroused because of their wrong deeds, they were most ready to accept Yusuf's remarks.

8. One of the Divine ways of treatment is the bestowal of power in government upon the righteous people.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 91

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ ءَاثَرَكَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَإِن كُنَّا لَخَاطِئِينَ

91. "They said: 'By Allah! Allah has indeed preferred you above us, and we certainly have been guilty'."

The Arabic term /'iar/ means: 'accepting other people's superiority over oneself'. Because of their wrong way of thinking, such as saying "***We are a (strong) group***"3, they did wrong things like throwing Yusuf down the well.

Allah made them so exasperated that they had to beg in order to fill their stomachs and only after this were they ready to confess that their plans were in ruins and they could see the reality of their wrong thinking.

The verse says:

"They said: 'By Allah! Allah has indeed preferred you above us, and we certainly have been guilty'."

The brothers had sworn on several occasions employing the holy phrase /tallah/. When the cup was discovered they swore to Allah that they had not come to that land to commit theft or any other kind of corruption.[4]

Swearing to Allah, they told their father that he was always repeating the name of Yusuf,[5] and by doing so he showed his extreme love towards him being in his ancient error.[6] Now they swore Yusuf was superior to them.[7]

Of course the brothers could not look Yusuf in the eyes because of their shame, and they were probably worried whether or not their crimes would be forgiven.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 92

قَالَ لاَ تَثْرِيبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

92. "He said: 'There is no reproach against you this day. Allah may forgive you; and He is the most Merciful of the merciful (ones)'."

The Arabic term /tarib/, mentioned in this verse, means 'to scorn, to count something sin, and as much blameworthy.'

At the time of the conquest of Mecca, the pagans had sought refuge in the Ka'bah. 'Umar on that occasion said:

"*We shall take revenge today!*"

However the Prophet (S) replied:

"*Today is the day of blessings*".

Then he asked the pagans what they thought. They said that they believed that all would be good, that the Prophet was their sublime brother. The Prophet (S) said that his words that day were the same as those of Yusuf.

Here is the word of Yusuf:

"He said: 'There is no reproach against you this day…"

'Umar then replied that he was ashamed of himself for what he said.8

Ali (as) said:

*"When you gain power over your adversary pardon him by way of thanks for being able to overcome him."*9

The traditions say that the heart of a youth is more lenient than that of an old person, and the immaculate Imam, narrating this verse has said that since Yusuf was young, he soon forgave his brothers.

Yusuf did not expect the shameful state of his brothers to continue at the time of his success in particular, and to reassure them, he immediately said that they would not be threatened or blamed on that day, and they would not feel grief or sorrow due to the past.

Not only did he declare that he had forgiven them but he also informed them that the right of Allah was forgivable, as well, by means of that regret and remorse.

He added:

"…Allah may forgive you; and He is the most Merciful of the merciful (ones)'."

This incident illustrates Yusuf's greatness for not only did he spare his own right, but as far as the Divine right was concerned, he reassured them that Allah was Compassionate and Merciful.

Explanations

1. Tolerance is an important instrument of administration.

2. One must learn from Yusuf's humanity and generosity for he not only overlooked his own right but he also went out of his way to secure Allah's pardon for his brothers.

3. Men of Allah are in the habit of pardoning once they are at the climax of their power and glory.

4. Allah's pardon can also extend to include those who had for years been giving trouble to two of His prophets, Yusuf and Ya'qub.

5. Once the servant of Allah forgives what can one expect Allah to do? He is the Most Forgiving of all!

6. To forgive those who are ashamed is the very habit of the Divine Being.

7. To attribute Allah as the Most Forgiving and as the Most Merciful of the merciful ones is the ritual for the process of prayer and repentance.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 93

اذْهَبُوا بِقَمِيصِي هَذَا فَاَلْقُوهُ عَلَي وَجْهِ أَبِي يَأْتِ بَصِيراً وَأْتُونِي بِاَهْلِكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

93. "Go with this shirt of mine and lay it on my father's face, he will (again) be able to see; and bring me your family all together."

This shirt has been mentioned in several occurrences of the story of Hadrat Yusuf.

A – At first the brothers had stained the shirt of Yusuf with fake blood and took it to his father, claiming that the wolf had eaten him.[10]

B – A shirt was torn from the back and was instrumental in identifying the offender.[11]

C – A shirt caused Ya'qub to regain his eyesight.

The verse says:

"Go with this shirt of mine and lay it on my father's face, he will (again) be able to see; and bring me your family all together."

We see that Yusuf's shirt on the face of a blind man can make him regain his sight, therefore, one can hope to be cured by whatever is in contact with the men of Allah, such as their mausoleums, courtyards, houses, doors, the earth, the walls, clothing, and anything else.

We have already been covering the stages in which Yusuf was recognized, their apologies to him, the pardon he granted and his request for Divine forgiveness; but the father's blindness, which had been a clue to the brothers' crime, was still outstanding. We have the solution to this problem in this verse.

Incidentally, the traditions say that Yusuf said:

"The person who takes my shirt to my father must be the same one who had taken my blood stained shirt to him, so that he may rejoice after having been saddened by it."

The traditions say that Yusuf seated all his brothers next to him every day and night for their meals and they always felt ashamed. So they sent him a message saying that they wanted to have their meals separately since looking at his face made them feel ashamed.

Yusuf answered:

“I take pride in sitting next to you and having my meals with you.”

One could only say: ‘Allah is the greatest’ for such a magnitude of spirit.

Explanations

1. Taking recourse to objects, which are somehow associated with men of Allah, is permitted. Yusuf’s shirt, for example, makes a blind man regain his eyesight.

2. He who fights against his carnal desires and passions, even his clothing becomes sacrosanct and sanctified.

3. There is no age limit for performing miracles and wonder workings by a saint.

4. Yusuf was knowledgeable about the invisible world, otherwise, how could he know that the shirt could cure his father’s blindness?

5. Affluent children ought to provide for their less well to do relatives especially their elderly parents.

6. Social conditions leave their impact on the performance of one’s duties.

7. One must take care of one’s family, in Yusuf’s case, he had to look after his family in order for them to come to Egypt. Attending to one’s relatives is a necessity once one fully observes the rights of others.

8. Migration and changing one’s residence have many effects, one of which is that it removes sad and bitter memories.

1. The current Surah, verse 17
2. Bihar-ul-’Anwar, vol. 12, p. 283
3. The current Surah, verses 8 and 14
4. Ibid, verse 73
5. Ibid, verse 85
6. Ibid, verse 95
7. Ibid, the verse under discussion
8. Tafsir-i-Qurtubi
9. Nahjul-Balaqah, saying No. 11
10. The current Surah; verse 18
11. Ibid, verse 27

Section 11: Jacob Goes to Yusuf

Surah Yusuf – Verse 94

وَلَمَّا فَصَلَتِ الْعِيرُ قَالَ أَبُوهُمْ إِنِّي لأَجِدُ رِيحَ يُوسُفَ لَوْلاَ أَن تُفَنِّدُونِ

94. "And when the caravan set out (from Egypt to Kan'an), their father said: 'Verily I perceive Yusuf's scent, unless you think me doting'."

Finally, Allah's grace became manifest. Beside them with joy, Ya'qub's sons took the shirt and headed for Kan'an. When the caravan departed from Egypt, their father said that he perceived Yusuf's scent while people around him would not believe him.

The verse says:

"And when the caravan set out (from Egypt to Kan'an), their father said: 'Verily I perceive Yusuf's scent, unless you think me doting'."

Explanations

The Qur'anic term /fasalat/ means 'distance' and /fasalati l'iru/ here means that the caravan distanced itself from Egypt. The term /tufannidun/ is derived from /fanida/ meaning the lack of ability to think and absence of wisdom.

Ya'qub was worry about the people around him who might attribute him silly, so he said: Perhaps the 'scent of Yusuf ' implies some fresh news from Yusuf. This issue is being discussed in scientific circles today as 'telepathy' which means the transfer of thought to others in far distant places.

That is, those who are closely related with each other, or who have extrasensory perception, can receive direct messages from someone else from a very long distance away.

Someone said to Imam Baqir (as):

"Sometimes, I feel terribly sorry for no reason in such a way that those around me perceive it."

The Imam responded:

"Muslims are all created out of the same core and nature, and when a serious accident occurs to one, someone else feels sorry in another land and place."

Surah Yusuf – Verse 95

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ إِنَّكَ لَفِي ضَلاَلِكَ الْقَدِيمِ

95. "They said: 'By Allah! you are in your ancient error'."

Those with Ya'qub, who normally were the spouses of his children, his grand sons and grand daughters, and other members of his extended family, had long since given up Yusuf for dead and thought this new assertion by Ya'qub was nothing but his refusal to face reality.

In fact they probably thought he was having delusions when he said that he perceived the scent of Yusuf. That was why, addressing him, they seriously and rudely said he was in his old error.

The verse says:

"They said: 'By Allah! you are in your ancient error'."

It becomes evident that 'persisting in his old error' does not mean error in belief. On the contrary, it means being in error in refusing to recognize what they perceived as the reality about Yusuf.

However these meanings show that they behaved unto that old great prophet very rudely and boldly. Once they remarked their father had been in a manifest aberration, and here they told him:

"...you are in your ancient error'."

They were unaware of the intimacy and sincerity of the old man of Kan'an, and regarded him as not being as enlightened and illuminated as them. They did not think that future events might be as clear to him as a reflection in a mirror.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 96

فَلَمَّآ أَن جَآءَ الْبَشِيرُ أَلْقَاهُ عَلَي وَجْهِهِ فَارْتَدَّ بَصِيراً قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُل لَّكُمْ اِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

96. "Then, when the bearer of the good news came, he cast it (the shirt) on his (Jacob's) face and (forthwith) he regained his sight. He said: 'Did I not tell you I know from Allah what you do not know?'"

After a number of difficult nights and days, one day Ya'qub heard a loud voice proclaiming that the caravan of Kan'an had just arrived from Egypt. Unlike the previous occasion, the brothers arrived in joyous spirits and went straight to their father's house.

Before anybody else, Bashir, 'the bearer of good news', came up to the old grieving man and placed the shirt over his face. Ya'qub was unable to see the shirt, but just before it was placed on his face, he sensed the familiar scent of his Yusuf.

A wonderful excitement overwhelmed the old man, the scent intensified when the shirt fell on his face,

and suddenly he felt his eyes were opened and he was able to see. The world, with all its beauties, was once again before his eyes; as the Qur'an says:

"Then, when the bearer of the good news came, he cast it (***the shirt***) ***on his*** (***Jacob's***) ***face and*** (***forthwith***) ***he regained his sight…"***

The brothers and their entourage burst into tears of joy and he, with a decisive tone, told them:

"…'Did I not tell you I know from Allah what you do not know?'"

If the purpose of the Qur'an that says 'his eyes turned white' is a decrease and diminishing of the eyesight, then the term /basiran/ means illumination, and it indicates that sadness and joy both leave an impact on one's sense of vision.

However, if the intent of the verse is a complete blindness, which can be inferred from the literal view of the verse, then the Qur'anic phrase which says 'and (forthwith) he regained his sight' would imply that the return of his eyesight was a miracle that the Qur'an proves it.

Explanations

1. The knowledge of the prophets has its origin in the Divine knowledge.

2. The prophets trust the promises of the Almighty as the Divine Will rules over all natural laws.

3. The clothing and the belongings of men of Allah can have an impact over some other beings.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 97

قَالُوا يَآ أَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَآ إِنَّا كُنَّا خَاطِئِينَ

97. "They said: 'O' our father! Ask forgiveness of our sins for us, verily we were guilty'."

This amazing miracle made the brothers think deeply about their dark past. In so doing they regretted their past misdeeds and asked their father to seek forgiveness for their sins.

The verse says:

"They said: 'O' our father! Ask forgiveness of our sins for us, verily we were guilty'."

This is a good lesson for us; that we must always think of reforming ourselves and compensate for our past mistakes. We are all sinners and offenders.

We should also take note that it is permissible to appeal to the men of Allah to ask forgiveness of one's

sins.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 98

قَالَ سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

98. "He said: 'Soon I will ask forgiveness for you from my Lord; He is the Forgiving, the Merciful'."

The great old man, who possessed a magnanimous spirit and with immense generosity, refrained from blaming them; instead he promised them that he would soon ask forgiveness for them from Allah. The verse says:

"He said: 'Soon I will ask forgiveness for you from my Lord;..."

It has been mentioned in some Islamic traditions that Ya'qub's (as) aim was to postpone acting upon their request until dawn the next Friday when would have been a more appropriate time for the acceptance of prayers and repentance. Ya'qub hoped that Allah would accept their repentance and overlook their sins, for Allah is Compassionate and Kind as the verse states:

"...He is the Forgiving, the Merciful'."

This verse and the verse before it show that asking a third party to ask forgiveness from Allah for oneself not only is not incompatible with monotheism, but also provides a way to merit Allah's approbation. Otherwise, how would it be possible that prophet Ya'qub (as) could accept his sons' request to seek forgiveness for them from Allah? There is a light at the end of the tunnel.

These verses teach us that no matter how hard and painful one's difficulties might be, and how limited and insufficient the apparent means and the possibilities might seem, one must not feel removed from hope in Allah's grace and favor.

In this story, Allah made a blind man regain his eyesight with a shirt and made the smell of that shirt travel a long distance, He enabled someone lost to return home after long years of separation, and healed the wounds of broken hearts can also remove the grave pains and difficulties.

Yes, in this story and historical event, there lies the great lesson of Unity and theology proving that nothing is difficult and complicated for the Will of Allah.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 99

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَي يُوسُفَ ءَاوَي إِلَيْهِ أَبَوَيْـهِ وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوا مِصْرَ إِن شَآءَ اللَّهُ ءَامِنِينَ

99. “Then when they entered unto Yusuf, he lodged his parents with him and said: ‘Enter Egypt, Allah willing, (all) in security’.”

The End of Yusuf and His Brothers

The family, in response to Yusuf’s invitation, and after much preparation, traveled to Egypt. Ya‘qub was riding to the destination while his lips were busy calling Allah and thanking Him.

This journey, unlike the previous ones, was free from all kinds of troubles, and those troubles could not even be compared to the remarkable gains which awaited them at the end of the journey.

The very thought of joining Yusuf made the trip easy for them so much so that a painful thorny path would seem as if it had been paved with velvet. Soon when the oases of Egypt came into view, they were finally there.

Typical of the style of the Qur’an, it skips over the details which we fill in by means of the traditional narrations and by our own imagination, and simply says that they entered into the presence of Yusuf.

The verse says:

“Then when they entered unto Yusuf, he lodged his parents with him...”

When they arrived at his palace, and Yusuf embraced his parents, this was the sweetest moment in Ya‘qub’s life. It was a meeting that had come about after many years of separation.

Every moment of this meeting and embracing Ya‘qub and Yusuf was so exciting that only Allah knows what happened and none else. In these sweet moments of reunion, then, only Allah knows the intensity of the bliss shared between the father and his beloved son.

Yusuf told every one to enter the land of Egypt and assured them that they would be safe and secure there.

The verse continues saying:

“...and said: ‘Enter Egypt, Allah willing, (all) in security’.”

One can conclude from this statement that Yusuf had come out of the gates of the town to welcome his parents. Perhaps the sentence ‘they entered unto Yusuf’ means that he had ordered tents to be erected there to receive and entertain preliminarily his parents before they entered the town.

Explanations

1. It is difficult, of course, to describe this part of the story. Yusuf had arranged some tents outside the city and waiting for his parents to come and that he would bring them respectfully into Egypt.

It was natural that in Kan‘an, when Yusuf’s parents and brothers were preparing themselves for the journey, people there had a very happy time.

They saw that by receiving the good news of Yusuf’s safety, and in the case that Ya‘qub had regained his eyesight, how joyful were the family setting off to meet Yusuf.

These people were also happy that Yusuf had become a treasurer and governor in Egypt and especially that, by sending wheat for them in the course of famine, he had supported them.

2. One can conclude from the Arabic term /abawayh/ (his parents), that Yusuf’s mother had also been alive at the time.

Some narrations say that Ya‘qub insisted and swore that Yusuf would recount his own story for him. As Yusuf began telling his story of how his brothers had taken him near the edge of the well and took off his shirt while threatening him, Ya‘qub fainted.

When he recovered, he again asked him to continue, but Yusuf swore by Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac (as) and begged his father to spare him from telling it, and Ya‘qub accepted.[1]

By the way, it is worthy to note that social posts and ranks should not cause us to be heedless of respecting our parents in any condition.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 100

وَرَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَي الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّداً وَقَالَ يَا أَبَتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ مِن قَبْلُ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّي حَقّاً وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السّجْنِ وَجَآءَ بِكُم مِّنَ الْبَدْوِ مِن بَعْدِ أَن نَّزَغَ الشَّيْطَانُ بَينِي وَبَيْنَ إِخْوَتِي إِنَّ رَبّي لَطِيفٌ لِمَا يَشَآءُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

100. “And he raised both his parents upon the throne, and they fell down prostrating before him, and he said: ‘O’ my father! This is the interpretation of my dream of aforetime! My Lord has made it come true; and He was indeed kind to me when He brought me out of the prison, and He brought you out of the desert (of Kan‘an into Egypt) after Satan had made strife between me and my brothers. Verily my Lord is Benignant unto what He wills. Verily He is indeed the All-Knowing, the All-Wise’.”

When he seated his parents on the throne, the magnitude of the Divine Grace and the profundity of such favors and blessings left such an impact upon his parents and brothers that they went into a state of prostration before him.

The verse says:

"And he raised both his parents upon the throne, and they fell down prostrating before him…"

Certainly prostration, implying worship, belongs only to Allah alone. Some Islamic traditions state that this prostration had been done as obedience and worship unto Allah as well as an act of respect towards Yusuf.

At this point he told his father that the meaning of his dream had now become clear, the dream of the sun, the moon and the eleven stars all prostrating before him were now represented by his parents and his eleven brothers prostrating before him.

The verse says:

"…and he said: 'O' my father! This is the interpretation of my dream of aforetime! My Lord has made it come true;…"

But even in the midst of triumph and glory, Yusuf never forgot Allah's mercy upon him; he recounted all of his troubles and how Allah had always helped him overcome them.

The verse says:

"…and He was indeed kind to me when He brought me out of the prison, and He brought you out of the desert (of Kan'an into Egypt) after Satan had made strife between me and my brothers…"

Interestingly enough, he did not mention his sojourn in the well; perhaps it was because he did not want to embarrass his brothers. All these favors and graces have their origin in Allah, for Allah is the source of Grace and He bestows his favors whenever and upon whosoever He wants.

He administers all the affairs of His subjects and helps them to solve their problems. He knows those who are in need and who merits his favor, for He is knowledgeable and wise.

The verse says:

"…Verily my Lord is Benignant unto what He wills. Verily He is indeed the All-knowing, the All-Wise'."

Explanations

1. The Arabic term /'arš/ lexically means the throne on which a sultan or ruler is seated. The term /xarru/ means throwing oneself upon the earth, while the term /badw/ means 'oasis, desert' and /nazaqa/ means 'initiating a task with intention of corruption'.

2. The Qur'anic term 'Latif' is one of Allah's names which implies that His power permeates into all complicated matters and its relevance to this verse is the fact that there were complications in Yusuf's life which could only have been solved by Allah's Power alone.

3. Yusuf became like the Ka‘ba for them, and his parents and his brothers prostrated before him for the sake of Allah. Were this prostration for other than Allah (s.w.t.), it would have been an act of polytheism, however, Ya‘qub (as) and Yusuf (as), who were two of Allah’s prophets, would not support such a forbidden act.

Messages to Remember

1. No matter in what position you are in, you should regard your parents as superior to yourselves.

2. Men of Allah regard entering and leaving prison as a monotheistic circle and a theological gesture.

3. All bitter and sweet events take place in accordance with Divine Knowledge and Wisdom.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 101

رَبِّ قَدْ آتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِن تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنتَ وَلِيِّي فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ

101. “O my Lord! You have given me to rule, and have taught me the interpretation of dreams. (O!) Originator of the heavens and the earth! You are my Protector in the world and the Hereafter. Cause me die a Muslim (in submission (unto you) and join me with the righteous.”

When they witness their own glory and power, the men of Allah are at once reminded of the Almighty. They are aware that everything that exists has its origin in Him.

Turning to the true Proprietor, the everlasting Benefactor, Yusuf gave thanks to Almighty Allah for bestowing upon him great political power, and the science of dream interpretation. This science had created tremendous changes in his life and that of the majority of His subjects and what a profound science it is!

The verse says:

“O my Lord! You have given me to rule, and have taught me the interpretation of dreams…”

It is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth and it is for this reason that everything is humble when facing Him; He is our Guardian and our Protector in this world and in the world Hereafter.

Yusuf continues his plea to Allah saying:

“…(O!) Originator of the heavens and the earth! You are my Protector in the world and the Hereafter. Cause me die a Muslim (in submission (unto you) and join me with the righteous.”

Explanations

1. It is a Divine prerogative to bestow sovereignty upon someone. Therefore, one should not consider one's sovereignty as a consequence of one's own initiative, thinking, power, allies, or one's own plan; on the contrary, the Divine will is the root and the main factor in one's rise to power.

2. Abu Hamzah has said that Ya'qub (as) lived for 147 years and he was 130 years of age when he called upon Yusuf in Egypt and stayed there for 17 years. Ibn Ishaq has said that when Ya'qub died, his body was placed in a casket made of Ebony wood and taken to the city of Bayt ul Muqaddas (Jerusalem).

After burying his father there, Yusuf returned to Egypt in accordance with the will of that great man. He lived for 23 years more after his father died. He was the first Messenger of the Children of Israel. He stated in his will that he would be buried near the grave of his fathers.

Some have said that he was buried in Egypt until Moses (as) brought his remains with him and buried them near the tomb of his father.

It is said that the position of prophecy was accorded to Robil after him and Yahuda acceded to the rank after the latter's term.

In the Book, An-Nubuwwah, Muhammad ibn Muslim, is quoted as saying:

"I asked Imam Baqir (as) who was /hujjah/, Allah's Authority on the earth at that time? Was it Ya'qub or Yusuf? He answered that Ya'qub (as) was, and Yusuf was the sovereign.

When Ya'qub passed away, Yusuf laid him in a casket, brought him to Damascus, and buried him in Bayt ul Muqaddas, and then Yusuf became the Authority of Allah after Ya'qub. I asked if Yusuf was a prophet and a messenger of Allah as well.

He answered: "Yes, have you not heard what Allah, the Glorious and the Magnanimous has said: meaning: 'Yusuf came to you previously along with evidences'?" [2]

Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated to have said:

"When Yusuf went to prison, he was twelve years old. He remained in prison for 18 years and he lived for 80 years after his release from prison which amounts to a total of 110 years.

And as Allah the Almighty destined him to pass away in Egypt, he was put into a casket made of marble and was buried in the middle of the Nile River. The reason why he was buried in such a way was because the people of Egypt started to vie with each other to bury him in their own quarter of the city and hence benefit from the blessings of the presence of such a pure body among them.

Thus it was considered more appropriate to bury the body in the middle of the Nile River, making it possible for the river water to flow over it and allow all the inhabitants to benefit from it.

This tomb remained in the Nile River until the time of Moses (as) when he took it out of the Nile and out of Egypt with himself.

A closer look at a few of the previous verses would reveal the following points of note:

1- Is Prostration Allowed to Other Than Allah?

As we discussed a foretime, regarding issues relating to the prostration of the angels to Adam; prostration can signify worship which in this case is particular to Allah, and it is not allowed for anyone in any religion to worship any being other than Allah. The monotheism of worship is an important part of general monotheism about which all prophets had a similar message and outlook.

Therefore, from this particular point of view, prostration must only be for Allah the same Allah Who had accorded so many favors and sovereignty to Yusuf, and who removed all of Ya‘qub's difficulties.

However, although prostration can be for Allah's sake, in the case of Yusuf it could also have been a sign of glorification and respect for Yusuf as well, because it had been performed in view of the grandeur of the favours which Allah had bestowed upon him.

From this point of view, the Arabic pronoun /lahu/ meaning 'before him' in the phrase: ***"and they fell down prostrating before him"*** which definitely refers to Yusuf is compatible with this meaning.

Another way of looking at it is that prostration in its broad meaning indicates humility or modesty, and is not always used according to its prevalent meaning as worship, rather it sometimes can refer to a very profound type of respect.

2- Social Security is a Great Blessing from Allah

Among all the merits and bounties of Egypt, Yusuf Pointed out the bounty of security. This shows that the bounty of security is the root of all merits.

It is indeed true because when security disappears other material and spiritual subjects of welfare will be in danger. When an environment is not secured, is not possible to worship Allah, nor is life with honesty and free mind, nor struggle and effort and endeavour for progression and social aims.

This phrase may be; however, an illusion to this fact that Yusuf wanted to say that the land of Egypt, where he was governing, was not any more the former country of Pharaoh. Those despotic behaviours, crimes, exploitations, cruelties and tortures had been disappeared. It was a completely secured site.

3- The Important Position of Knowledge

At the end of the holy verse, Yusuf once again stresses the importance of the science of dream interpretation and compares it with the sovereignty bestowed upon him. He finally concludes that knowledge, even such a science as dream interpretation has a great impact even on such matters as political rule.

4- Man Can Undergo a Great Deal of Changes Throughout His Lifetime

However, the last years are the milestones in one's life, because it marks the conclusion of one's life, and the final judgment depends on it. Therefore, faithful and conscious people always ask Allah to illuminate the last years of their lives and Yusuf did as such saying:

"...Cause me die a Muslim (in submission unto You), and join me with the righteous!"

5- Did Yusuf's Mother Come to Egypt?

One can well conclude from the above verses that Yusuf's mother was still alive at that time and that she came to Egypt along with her husband and her sons. To compensate for this blessing she prostrated.

However, some commentators insist on the matter that his mother, Rail (Rahil), had already passed away and it was his aunt who came to Egypt and had substituted for his mother. Nevertheless, in the Torah it says that Rail passed away after giving birth to Benjamin.3

This conclusion can also be drawn from other narrations such as those narrated by Wahab ibn Bunyah and Ka'b ul Akhbar both of which have been apparently taken from the Torah.

Anyway, we cannot explain away or interpret the verses of the Qur'an at face value which say that Yusuf's mother was alive that day and this fact should not be overlooked without adequate justification.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 102

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَآءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ أَجْمَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَمْكُرُونَ

102. "That is of the news of the Unseen (which) We reveal to you (O' Prophet); and you were not with them (the brothers of Joseph) when they agreed upon their plan and they were plotting."

After winding up the story of Yusuf, with all its didactic lessons and precious conclusions and without any extravagant and historical superstition, the Qur'an, addressing the Prophet (S), says that this information was news from the invisible world which Allah had revealed to him, because he was not there to witness the most secret and detailed thoughts and behaviors that they had occurred, such as the secret plotting

of the brothers against Yusuf and their attempts to deceive their father.

The verse says:

"That is of the news of the Unseen (*which*) ***We reveal to you*** (*O' Prophet*)***; and you were not with them*** (*the brothers of Joseph*) ***when they agreed upon their plan and they were plotting."***

Therefore, it was only revelation of Allah which informed him of such important news.

This statement makes it clear that though the story of Yusuf has been mentioned in the Torah, and naturally the people of Arabia, more or less, knew something about it, but they never knew the whole event properly and in detail, even what was said in private meetings has not been free from additional matters and superstitions.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 103

وَمَآ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

103. "And most people will not believe, though you desire it."

The Arabic term (harasa) refers to an intense desire for something and the struggle to attain it.

The prophets were zealous, sympathetic, and eager in their efforts to guide others to the Right Path and the fact that people did not accept the faith does not imply that the prophets had failed or that they had any shortcomings.

This refusal is due to man's liberty and freedom of choice itself which he employs in his reluctance to accept the faith. Therefore, most people have been repeatedly criticized by the Qur'an from the ideological and religious perspective.

The verse says:

"And most people will not believe, though you desire it."

However, receiving these clear signs revealed and hearing these divine admonitions all people must believe and return to the right path, but in spite of the desist of the Prophet, most of them do not believe.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 104

وَمَا تَسْأَلُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِين

104. "And you do not ask them for any reward for it; it** (**the Qur'an**) **is no other than a reminder for all mankind."

In this verse the Qur'an refers to the fact that mankind has excuse and no real reason to reject the call of the Prophet because of the obviousness of the message, he also does not require any reward for delivering it to them, which indicates that he has no personal ulterior motives and there is no heed for him to fabricate the text of his message.

The verse says:

"And you do not ask them for any reward for it;..."

This is a universal call and a reminder to the people of the world, at the same time, it is a table spread for princes and the paupers alike, indeed for all human beings.

The verse says:

"...it** (**the Qur'an**) **is no other than a reminder for all mankind."

Generosity is one of the signs of a sincere believer. He expects no reward or thanks from anyone.

Certainly, the Qur'an is a reminder because:

1. It reminds one of His blessings and attributes.

2. It reminds one of his past and his future.

3. It reminds one of the fall, the collapse, as well as the glory of human societies.

4. It reminds one of the Day of Resurrection and its stages.

5. It reminds one of the magnitudes of existence.

6. It reminds one of the lives of historical personages.

The Qur'anic sciences and its ordinances are facts which must be learned and always kept in mind, because the Qur'anic term /�ikr/ is called to a knowledge which exists in mind and one does not neglect it.

1. Majma' ul Bayan.
2. Surah Ghafir, No. 40 verse 34.
3. The Torah, Genesis, Chapter 35, No. 18 says: "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin.

Section 12: Histories of the Ancient People Serve as a Lesson

Surah Yusuf – Verse 105

وَكَأَيِّن مِنْ ءَايَةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ يَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُونَ

105. "And how many a sign there is in the heavens and on the earth which they pass by while they turn away from it."

They have been misled for their eyes are not open and their ears do not hear. Thus they disregard and turn away from the many signs of Allah which are in the heavens and on the earth as if they were nonexistent.

They do not realize the Divine implications associated with all those events which they experience in their everyday lives and see with their own eyes, such as the profound system at work in the sunrise and the sunset, the dynamism of the everyday lives of plants, birds, insects, and human beings, the flow of streams and rivers, the submission of all of creation to laws and commands, and finally, the universal plan and purpose inherent in the entirety of existence, written, as it were merely drawings on its doors and walls.

This verse was probably revealed to the Prophet (S) in order to soothe him. Every authentic leader and Imam would naturally be concerned and saddened if his call to the people was ignored.

Such needless people always see the signs of Allah's power and wisdom in nature and in creation and are not mindful about them for one minute. They witness earthquakes, solar and lunar eclipses, thunder and lightning, the revolution of the stars and the galaxies, and still pay no attention to them in their minds.

The verse says:

"And how many a sign there is in the heavens and on the earth which they pass by while they turn away from it."

Explanations

1. The purpose of man "passing by" the Divine signs is for him to observe them.

2. The objective of man 'passing by' the signs is the motion of the Earth which makes it possible for man

to observe astronomical phenomena in the skies.

3. Some verses have indirectly predicted that man would bring outer space under his control.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 106

وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُم بِاللَّهِ إِلاَّ وَهُم مُّشْرِكُونَ

106. "And most of them do not believe in Allah except that they associate others* (*with him*)*."

This verse indicates that most of those who claim to be believers in Allah in fact associate others with Him, their faith is not pure but mixed with the worship of and reliance upon others.

Imam Rida (as) has said that polytheism in this verse does not mean blasphemy and the worship of idols. Rather, it means focusing one's attention on anything other than Allah.[1]

Also Imam Sadiq (as) has said that polytheism in man is more hidden and latent than the movement of black ants on a black stone at night."[2]

And, in a tradition, Imam Baqir (as) has said that people are monotheistic in their worship but in their obedience to other than Allah they enter into polytheism.[3]

In some other narrations, we read that the purpose of polytheism mentioned in this verse is polytheism in regard to favours: for example, when one says that someone else has accomplished his task for him and were it not for his sake, he would have perished; and the like of it.[4]

A pure monotheist is one who does not have anyone or any object upon which he depends and which occupies a central role in his life, and worship except Allah. His words are for Allah's sake, his deeds are for Allah, whatever he does, he does it having Allah in mind, and he recognizes no laws except the laws of Allah.

To sum up, faith is hierarchical, and pure faith is that which allows no room for polytheism.

The Signs of a Sincere Believer

1. He who does not expect a reward or thanks from any one when he spends out something to someone.

"...no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks."[5]

2. In worship: he will only be subservient to Allah and to no one else.

"...and make none sharer to the worship due unto his Lord." [6]

3. In propagation of the faith he will not receive rewards from any other than Allah.

"...my reward is only with Allah..."[7]

4. In matrimony, he will not fear poverty, and he will marry being confident that Allah is true to His promises.

"...if they are needy, Allah will make them free from want out of his grace..."[8]

In his communication with people he will surely be more concerned about satisfying Allah (s.w.t.) than satisfying others.

"...Say Allah; then leave them sporting..."[9]

In fighting the enemy he will fear no one but Allah.

"...and do not fear any one but Allah;..."[10]

In love and affection, he will love no one as much as he loves Allah.

"...but for those who have faith, their love of Allah is more intensive."[11]

In business and commerce he will never forget Allah (s.w.t.).

"Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah..."[12]

Surah Yusuf – Verse 107

أَفَأَمِنُوا أَن تَأْتِيَهُمْ غاشِيَةٌ مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ أَوْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ

107. "Do they then feel secure from the enveloping punishment coming upon them from Allah, or the coming of the Hour suddenly, while they are unaware?"

The Qur'anic noble term /qašiyah/ means a punishment that encompasses the entire society or each individual.

In this verse, Allah issues a warning to all those who have not yet accepted the faith, and who pass by clear Divine signs and heedlessly overlook it. Such people are polytheists in their deeds and should not consider themselves safe and secure from the all-encompassing Divine penalty which will suddenly be inflicted upon them.

The verse says:

"Do they then feel secure from the enveloping punishment coming upon them from Allah..."

The Day of Judgment will suddenly arrive and the Divine great court of justice will be established in order to settle their accounts while they are unaware and ignorant about it. The Divine punishment is all encompassing and there is no possibility for escape, yet they behave as if they were secure from all this.

The verse continues saying:

"...or the coming of the Hour suddenly, while they are unaware?"

Surah Yusuf – Verse 108

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُوا إِلَي اللَّهِ عَلَي بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَاْ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَآ أَنَاْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

108. "Say (O' Our Apostle): 'This is my way. I invite to Allah with clear sight, I and whoever follows me; and glory be to Allah! And I am not (one) of the polytheists'."

The way of the Prophet of Islam (S) is clear and transparent to all those who want to seek guidance, and true guidance comes from Allah, thus his way is a call to Allah, the only true Reality. The verse says:

"Say (O' Our Apostle): 'This is my way. I invite to Allah with clear sight..."

Indeed, he does not follow this path without knowledge or by imitation; rather he and those who follow him traverse this path with full knowledge and insight. This verse implies that every Muslim who follows the Prophet (S) must show the Way of Allah to others in his words and deeds.

This is the path of pure monotheism, the path to Allah the One, Who is free of all defects and has no partners or companions.

The verse says:

"...I and whoever follows me; and glory be to Allah! And I am not (one) of the polytheists'."

Thus the believer in the One True God cannot and should not be considered as one of the polytheists.

This verse being located within the context of the Surah Yusuf itself indicates that the way of life of the Prophet Muhammad (S) is not differentiable from that of Yusuf, the great Divine prophet.

From the prison he used to call people to worship the One Allah, and regarded deities other than Him as merely fictitious names which when called upon could not answer, for they are ignorantly worshipped only through imitation and superstition.

Explanations

1. The Prophet's way of life is visible and transparent and is the object of attention and concentration for

all those who seek the truth.

2. A leader must have full insight into everything that is relevant to his position.

3. A leader's call must be directed towards Allah, not towards himself.

4. Religious propagators and preachers must be sincere and genuine and their propagation techniques must revolve around making the concept of Allah that is free of all symbols of polytheism and partnership.

5. Each and every one of the followers of the Prophet must be a propagator and preacher calling the people towards Allah with insight.

Incidentally, the basic pillar of Islam is monotheism and the negation of polytheism.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 109

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ إِلاَّ رِجَالاً نُوحِي إِلَيْهِم مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الاَرْضِ فَيَنظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَدَارُ الاَخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا أَفَلا تَعْقِلُونَ

109. "And We did not send (apostles) before you but men from the people of the towns whom We did inspire with revelations. Have they not traveled in the earth and seen what was the end of those who came before them? And certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who are pious. Do you not understand?"

The opponents of the prophets always used to criticize them for being human and therefore not different to those who did not believe. This was also the case with the people who were the contemporaries of our Prophet (S).

They also used to raise such a criticism which this verse answers. The verse does not deny the humanity of the prophets, it affirms that they were men, but men upon whom descended Divine Revelation.

These men used to live in the same towns and villages as other human beings, and had social intercourse with them and were well aware of their pains, needs and difficulties.

The verse says:

"And We did not send (apostles) before you but men from the people of the towns whom We did inspire with revelations..."

All of the history of mankind is the history of sending prophets and their acceptance or rejection by the

people to whom they were sent. In this regard the Qur'an challenges the skeptical to travel throughout the earth and see the end of those who rejected the truth.

The verse continues saying:

"...Have they not traveled in the earth and seen what was the end of those who came before them?..."

This investigation and research, because its subject is tangible and evident, provides the best instructive lesson that is available to all and can be experienced by everyone.

Compared to this passing and transient world, the Hereafter is more suited to the pious and is better than this world, it is free from troubles and is eternal, and man would come to this very conclusion if he utilized his intellect.

The verse says:

"...And certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who are pious. Do you not understand?"

Explanations

1. The prophets were human beings like other people in the fullest sense of the word and used to live among them. They were not angels, nor were they seeking after their own welfare.

2. All the prophets were men for the means of propagation and long arduous travel in its way can only be accomplished by men.

3. The knowledge of the prophets has been gained through revelation from the omniscience of Allah. Technically it has been 'inspired'.

4. The dispatch of the prophets (as) on their mission, the descent of the Divine revelation, and the uprooting of obstinate unbelievers are all examples of the traditional way of the Divine in history.

5. The polytheists, however, have nothing to gain from their opposition to the prophets. Even in this world they will be surrounded by punishment and pain. However, for the virtuous people in this world, the Hereafter would be much more than they could have imagined while being in this world.

6. Wisdom and meditation lead man directly towards the teachings of the prophets.

7. It is necessary, of course, to preserve historical relics and monuments for the experience and instruction of the future generations.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 110

حَتَّي إِذَا اسْتَيْأَسَ الرُّسُلُ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كُذِبُوا جَآءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا فَنُجِّيَ مَن نَّشَآءُ وَلاَ يُرَدُّ بَأْسُنَا عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُـجْرِمِينَ

110. "Till when the messengers despaired and they (***disbelievers***) ***thought they had been told a lie, Our help came to them and We delivered whom We pleased. But Our punishment will not be averted from the guilty people."***

Whilst preaching the Divine message, incorrigible and obstinate elements would raise such a hue and cry and put up such an opposition that even the prophets began to despair of ever guiding such ungrateful and ignorant folk and became concerned that the people would take them to be liars.

It was at these low moments that Allah would send them His assistance and saved those whom He chose and punished whom He willed.

The verse says:

"Till when the messengers despaired and they (***disbelievers***) ***thought they had been told a lie, Our help came to them and We delivered whom We pleased…"***

After insisting on doing their evil deeds, after actively resisting the Divine call, and after all the ultimatums delivered to him, when the inveterate sinner is confronted with the Divine punishment, it is impossible for him to avert it by any power.

The verse says:

"…But Our punishment will not be averted from the guilty people."

Some Examples of the despair of the prophets throughout their call:

Only a few individuals accepted the faith after Noah had tried for very many years to call the people to the worship of the One True God.

Allah told him:

'None of your people will believe except those who have already believed.'[13]

Noah then, condemning those people which reveal his desperate situation says that no one except immoral, ungrateful children will be born from this generation.[14]

In the lives and call of the prophets Hud, Salih, Shu'ayb, Musa, and 'Isa (as), one sees their despair when confronted by the recalcitrance of their enemies.

There are many examples where the people suspected the prophets of lying. We read in Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 27:

"...may we think you are liars."

And the Pharaoh told Musa (as):

"Truly, I think that you have been bewitched O Moses!"[15]

As for Allah's triumph in this state, the Qur'an also shows that during this state of despair Allah bestows victory over the unbelieving folk, which is a right that Allah has reserved for Himself.

In Surah Ar-Rum, Allah says:

"And helping the believers is ever incumbent on Us."[16]

Elsewhere He says:

"We saved Hud and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us, and delivered them from a harsh punishment."[17]

With regard to the inexorability of Allah's punishment, we see in Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13, verse 11, which implies that when Allah intends evil upon a people, there is no averting it.

Surah Yusuf – Verse 111

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لأُوْلِي الأَلْبَابِ مَا كَانَ حَدِيثاً يُفْتَرَي وَلَكِن تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
وَهُدًي وَرَحْمَةً لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

111. "Indeed in their stories, there is a lesson for the possessors of intellect. It is not an invented tale, but a confirmation of what came before it, and a clear exposition of all things, and a guidance and a mercy for people who believe."

The Arabic words /'ibrat/ and /ta'bir/ denote to pass, and the passing from one stage to another. When Yusuf says that this was the interpretation of his dream of old, it signifies the passing of his dream into reality.

And /'brat/ also means passing from what was capable of being seen and heard into a state where they are not capable of being seen or heard but exist nevertheless.

The Qur'anic term /qasasihim/ perhaps refers to the story of all the prophets or it probably focuses on the stories of Yusuf, Ya'qub, the brothers, the 'Aziz of Egypt, and the bitter and sweet events associated with them told in this story.

Anyway, the last verse of this Surah is comprehensive in content dealing with all the issues of this Surah in a concise manner. It tells us that all the stories of the holy Qur'an, including the story of Yusuf and his brothers as well as that of the prophets, the faithful and the unbelievers, are useful and instructive lessons for all those who are not afraid to use their minds.

These stories teach us about the causes of victory and defeat, success and frustration, happiness and misfortune, and elevation and degradation. Briefly put, they show us what should be of value or should lack value in our lives. However, it is only the /'ulil al bab/ (the people of understanding) that can learn from the instructive lessons that are taught.

The Qur'an says:

"Indeed in their stories, there is a lesson for the possessors of intellect..."

These stories, the Qur'an adds, have not been fabricated or false. They have been revealed to the Prophet unveiling the true history of past generations which confirm the original books of the past prophets. The verse says:

"...It is not an invented tale, but a confirmation of what came before it..."

Whatever is needed by man and the identification of all those things that are the real bases of man's true happiness, have been elucidated in these verses.

For this reason the Qur'an is the source of all guidance for those who seek it and the source of blessings for all those who are believers. The verse continues saying:

"...and a clear exposition of all things, and a guidance and a mercy for people who believe."

These stories, as instructive and heart rending as they are, are identical with the truth and there is not the slightest deviation in their authenticity or objectivity. They therefore carry an enormous impact for we know that fables, no matter how interesting they might be, are not as impressive as true stories.

Therefore, it becomes clear how the school of Yusuf, the fighter for holy causes, the abstinent, the champion of faith and virtue, the angel like man, the exemplar of benevolence and humanitarianism, the man of peace and reform and, finally, the representation of human perfection, is formed.

The godly school represented by this spiritual and political personality, does not only have a beneficial impact upon all social classes, but it can also provide valuable lessons for world leaders as well, saving the political world from lack of faith, mischief, lying, and aggression, leading them towards faith, humanitarianism and virtue, thus guaranteeing world peace and security for all.

We send warm greetings to you O' celestial and heavenly man from the lovers of truth and humanitarianism whose illustrious story has been the center of attention of the entire world. Your life is a

torch that leads and directs man towards his true happiness.

We who aspire to truth and justice send loving greetings to you, the champion of faith and virtue who did not surrender himself to the illegitimate tendencies of deviants, who was jailed for not having committed any crime, adding another page of pride to the history of enlightened people.

O Allah! bestow upon us open eyes, open ears, and zealous hearts so that we can benefit from the ways of our predecessors to find a path of salvation from the difficulties in which we are immersed.

O Allah! Make us so receptive and kin to be able to see the true end of the life of the former nations who, after victory, painfully defeated because of disunity and that we do not go along the way they went.

O Allah, provide us with such a sincere intention to be able to trample upon our egoistic selves and bestow upon us a wisdom which does not make us arrogant when we are victorious, and bestow upon us such tolerance which would enable us to leave others to undertake tasks which they are more capable of performing.

Once you bestow these on us, we shall then be able to overcome all difficulties and illuminate the world with the Everlasting Light which shines forth from Islam and the Qur'an. O Allah, the Almighty, illuminate our hearts with the light of the Qur'an and put us in a position to execute all the commands of the Qur'an.

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
2. Safinat ul Bihar, vol. 1, p. 697
3. Kafi vol. 2, p. 292
4. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn vol. 2, p. 475
5. Surah 'Insan, No. 96, verse 9
6. Surah Kahf, No. 18, verse 110.
7. Surah Saba', No. 34, verse 47.
8. Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 32.
9. Surah Al-Ana'am, No. 6, verse 91.
10. Surah Al-Ahzab, No. 33, verse 40.
11. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 165.
12. Surah An-Nur, No. 24, verse 37.
13. Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 36.
14. Surah Noah, No. 71, verse 27.
15. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 101.
16. Surah Ar-Rum, No. 30, verse. 47.
17. Surah Hud, No. 11, verser. 58.

Links

[1] https://www.al-islam.org/organization/imam-ali-foundation

[2] https://www.al-islam.org/printpdf/book/export/html/29408

[3] https://www.al-islam.org/printepub/book/export/html/29408

[4] https://www.al-islam.org/printmobi/book/export/html/29408

[5] https://www.al-islam.org/person/sayyid-abbas-sadr-ameli

[6] https://www.al-islam.org/tags/tafsir